31997

National Library of Canada | Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE

THÈSES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

NAME OF AUTHOR/*NOM DE L'AUTEUR* RAYMOND E. JONES

TITLE OF THESIS/*TITRE DE LA THÈSE* John William De Forest As Literary Artist: A study of His Use of the Social Fable and the Novel of Manners

UNIVERSITY/*UNIVERSITÉ* University of Alberta

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/ *GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE* Ph. D.

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/*ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE GRADE* 1977

NAME OF SUPERVISOR/*NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE* M. L. Ross

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

DATED/*DATÉ* Feb 28/77 SIGNED/*SIGNÉ* Raymond E Jones

PERMANENT ADDRESS/*RÉSIDENCE FIXE*
#415 4615-106A ST
Edmonton Alberta
T6H 5H2

NL-91 (3-74)

National Library of Canada

Cataloguing Branch
Canadian Theses Division

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Direction du catalogage
Division des thèses canadiennes

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us a poor photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de mauvaise qualité.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

NL-339 (3/77)

M

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

JOHN WILLIAM DE FOREST AS LITERARY ARTIST: A STUDY OF HIS USE OF THE SOCIAL FABLE AND THE NOVEL OF MANNERS

by

© RAYMOND E. JONES

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
SPRING, 1977

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "John William De Forest As Literary Artist: A Study of His Use of the Social Fable and the Novel of Manners" submitted by Raymond E. Jones in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Morton L. Ross
Supervisor

John Lauber

Buster M. Smith

Jon Stott

External Examiner

Date December 10, 1976

DEDICATION

To Maryam who endured with patience and love.

To Mark and Sara who can now have their father back.

ABSTRACT

John William De Forest is usually treated as either an early realist or a transitional writer. This study tries to establish that he was a literary artist--something which historically-minded critics have generally neglected to insist upon. It does this by examining the two major components of De Forest's art, the social fable and the novel of manners.

De Forest was a constant critic of American society. He was particularly concerned with the moral and social limitations of the provincial ideas which he believed to be in conflict with more humane and progressive ones. He was also dismayed by contemporary social and political values which he believed were destroying traditional ones. He used literature to illustrate the clash of such moral and social ideas. These illustrations I define as social fables, that is, patterns of action in which the characters are symbols or types of various ideas.

De Forest sought to portray as well as to criticize American society. This committed him to a presentation of life and people, not of concepts and allegorical embodiments. Therefore, he worked within the traditions of the novel of manners by describing habitual conduct, customs, conventions, and mores.

De Forest was a successful literary artist when he combined and made interdependent the social fable and the novel of manners. The social fable thus gave form to the novel of manners and the novel of manners gave life to the social fable.

To support this contention, I examine De Forest's minor works as failures to fuse social fables with complementary and vivifying studies of manners. I then examine, at length and in chronological order, De Forest's best novels. In spite of certain flaws, most notably De Forest's tendency to resort to the sentimental love formulae of popular fiction, these works achieve a high measure of success. Miss Ravenel's Conversion (1867), Kate Beaumont (1872), Honest John Vane (1875), and Playing the Mischief (1875) show that, between the close of the Civil War and the end of the Grant Administration, De Forest was, quite simply, America's best novelist. This work has been unjustly ignored for too long: on the basis of it, De Forest deserves a place of respect in the pantheon of nineteenth-century American novelists.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my deep appreciation to my supervisor, Professor Morton L. Ross, who gave me counsel and courage.

I also wish to thank the Canada Council and the Killam Foundation for their financial support.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to my typist, Mrs. W. Freeman, who combined technical skill with grace under pressure.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. MINOR FICTION: WITCHING TIMES AND DE FOREST'S HISTORICAL NOVELS 32

III. MINOR FICTION: THREE NOVELS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY 76

IV. THE FABLE OF NATIONAL MANNERS AND MORALS: MISS RAVENEL'S CONVERSION 144

V. THE ANATOMY OF SOUTHERN BARBARISM: KATE BEAUMONT 211

VI. THE POLITICS OF PLUNDER: HONEST JOHN VANE AND PLAYING THE MISCHIEF 255

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 310

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1898, John William De Forest ended a seventeen year silence with the publication of his final novel, A Lover's Revolt. The New York Times marked the event by having Edwin Oviatt conduct an interview with the aging author for its "Authors at Home" series. With his introductory remarks Oviatt underlined the sad fate of De Forest's reputation:

> His name suggests little to the reader now, and many would have to dust up their memories a bit to place him at all. Yet thirty years ago he was a famous writer, as famous as any in America in his time. . . . Competent critics gave him the honor of being the greatest of living novelists in America, articles of critical intent on his work were printed in the monthlies; yet how few to-day know anything about his "Kate Beaumont," or have read "The Wetherell [sic] Affair," or have even heard of "Overland"?[1]

Oviatt's rhetorical question about the extent of De Forest's popular reputation was answered less than three years later when an anonymous reviewer of The Downing Legends: Stories in Rhyme (1901) admitted that, "J. W. De Forest is, as we learn from the title page of the work before us, author of fourteen previous works, and alas! we have never heard of him before this day."[2] De Forest's body of work is actually even more extensive than the reviewer realized.

It includes two volumes each of history, of memoirs (not published during his lifetime), and of poetry, at least two dozen articles and reviews, about fifty short stories, and fourteen novels, at least three of which, as this essay will argue, are among the finest novels written in nineteenth-century America.

Born on March 31, 1826, at Humphreysville (later Seymour) in Connecticut, De Forest had a breadth of experience unusual for an American author of his time. His family felt that he was too feeble to endure an education at nearby Yale and sent him abroad in 1846 to live in Syria with his brother Henry, a medical missionary. Before his return to America in 1847, he was able to pay brief visits to Greece, Turkey, and the Holy Land. Once home, he applied himself to historical scholarship and, in 1850, signed a contract for the publication of his first book, History of the Indians of Connecticut from the Earliest Known Period to 1850 (1851). Possibly because he was inspired by the success of this book which was reissued in 1852 and again in 1853, De Forest, who had already begun a lengthy visit to Europe by the time it was published, seemed decided on a career as an historian.[3] He came to feel, however, that he did not have a sufficient command of Latin to be a good historian.[4] Still determined to be an author, he turned his attention to poetry which especially intrigued him[5] although it was a form for which he had scarcely any talent. Thus it was not until he returned to the United States, either late in 1854 or early in 1855, that he committed himself seriously as a writer of fiction.

De Forest's travels were of benefit to his development as an artist. While in Europe, he had written to his brother Andrew that, ". . . a man cannot write without being interested in his subject; unless, indeed, he is driven to it day after day by want of bread."[6] It is possible that his experiences, by giving him topics which interested him and which magazines would publish,[7] may have helped him to recognize his talent as a writer of prose. He was also able to utilize the articles he had written in two books, Oriental Acquaintance: Or, Letters from Syria (1856) and European Acquaintance; Being Sketches of People in Europe (1858). More importantly, De Forest was now able to look at his own society from a more sophisticated, relative, and critical viewpoint for, as James F. Light has said, "his American provincialism had been subdued by his travels . . . ."[8] Evidence of this is present throughout his fiction, but might best be signalled by his own comment, in European Acquaintance, about the value of studying foreign languages and character: "Now all wisdom is surely not confined by American shores, and even religion seems to have existed before the Declaration of Independence."[9]

De Forest's critical perspective was further widened by his experiences upon his return to America. In New Haven, he met Harriet Silliman Shepard, daughter of Dr.

Charles Upham Shepard. Dr. Shepard was an internationally famous geologist who held simultaneous academic appointments at Amherst College and at Charleston Medical College. He was most famous as a lecturer on mineralogy but, according to James F. Light, who fails to cite his source of information, he was also "a popular lecturer in both the North and South on the subject of 'Manners.'"[10] De Forest accompanied the Shepards to Charleston in November, 1855. He returned to spend at least two winters there after his marriage to Harriet on June 5, 1856.[11] He was also there briefly in 1861, when the South was preparing for the Civil War, in order to take his wife, who had spent the winter in Charleston, back to the safety of the North.

De Forest's stays in Charleston gave him a knowledge of the ante-bellum South that few Northerners ever acquired. Since Dr. Shepard was a respected member of the community, De Forest was able to be an active participant in Charleston's cultural life. He was, for instance, able to attend meetings of very select groups. These meetings featured the reading of learned papers by many of the most famous men of the day, open discussion, and an elegant supper.[12] Such participation permitted him to see much which he could admire in the Southern aristocracy. He felt that his associates provided strong evidence to support Charleston's boast that in "intellects, morals, and manners it stood head and shoulders above any other American municipality."[13] This sympathetic knowledge of the South, which complemented his knowledge of his native North, enabled De Forest to look at Southerners with far more objectivity than might be expected of a Northerner during that turbulent era. As the possibility of armed conflict grew greater, for instance, he recognized that both sides would remain rigid in their determination to hold on to their own peculiar ways and views. Southerners, he ironically declared in the Atlantic Monthly in 1861, "see but one side of the shield,--which is quite different, as we know, from the custom of the rest of mankind."[14]

During his first visit to Charleston, De Forest was quite free of abolitionist sentiment,[15] but he was never converted to the Southern stand on slavery. He wrote to his family, "I am stiff as far as the politics of the matter are concerned, as well as the remote question of justice or injustice. I believe in Free Soil, Kansas Squatters, Sharp's rifles, and Mr. Seward."[16] When war broke out, therefore, he joined the Union cause. His position was given concise expression in a poem, "Campaigning," in which he called the war, "That strife 'twixt valiant right and valiant wrong, / 'Twixt anarchy and crystallizing laws!"[17]

De Forest received a commission as a captain in the 12th Connecticut Volunteers on January 1, 1862, and served in the Louisiana campaign under Generals Butler and Banks, and in the Virginia campaign under General Sheridan. Following the war he served with The Freedmen's Bureau in

Greenville, South Carolina. Later, he summarized his military service: "Counting service in war and peace, I was six and a half years under the colors. I was in three storming parties, six days of field engagement, and thirty-six days of siege duty, making forty-six [sic] days under fire."[18]

Before he began his military service, De Forest was already a professional man of letters who had published, in addition to the history of the Indians and the two travel books already mentioned, two novels--"Witching Times," serialized in Putnam's Monthly Magazine in ten installments, December, 1856 to September, 1857, and Seacliff; Or, The Mystery of the Westervelts (1859)--and over a dozen stories and articles in various magazines. The majority of this work still possesses some interest because De Forest revealed himself to be a writer of strong intellect with a keen sense of observation and a ready wit. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that De Forest's early work was more a promise of future fulfillment than the accomplishment of a finished artist. His apprenticeship ended, however, with the war.

De Forest's military service deprived him of the time to devote himself exclusively to literary activity, but it did reward him with a wealth of personal experience and an abundance of native materials he could utilize when he resumed his interrupted career. While still on active duty, in fact, he began a period of intense literary activity, which lasted until 1881, by publishing in Harper's New Monthly Magazine (September, 1864), "The First Time Under Fire," the initial installment of a series of articles based on his experiences as a soldier during the war and Reconstruction.[19] Personal experience also formed the basis of his novel about the war years, Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty (1867). This novel was followed by a steady stream of essays and stories as well as by eleven other novels, the most notable of which are Kate Beaumont (1872), Honest John Vane (1875), and Playing the Mischief (1875).

Ultimately, as this study will contend, his reputation should be based on his achievement in the four novels I have just mentioned. They demonstrate him to have been, at least from 1867 to 1875, quite simply the best novelist in America. Admittedly, the competition for that title was not as fierce as it was to become in the 1880's. It was an age ruled by the women sentimentalists. Vying for massive popularity were Augusta Jane Evans's St. Elmo (1867), Elizabeth Phelps Ward's The Gates Ajar (1868), Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth's The Maiden Widow (1870) and Self-Raised (1876), and the male entries which displayed the same strain of sentimental piety, Edward Payson Roe's Barriers Burned Away (1872) and Opening a Chestnut Burr (1874). Among those writers still respected today, Howells, James, and Twain were still engaged upon their early, less significant work, and only Edward Eggleston had produced his most notable novel. His Hoosier Schoolmaster (1871) was a best seller but it is more honoured as a pioneering work of western realism than as a successful novel. Such facts may seem to diminish De Forest's claim to anything but historic importance, but a reading of his novels quickly dispels that idea. They reveal him to be a genuine artist who gave some brilliance to an otherwise drab period.

Although I wish to make a strong case for De Forest as an artist whose work deserves inclusion in the canon of important American novels, critical honesty compels me to acknowledge at the outset that he did produce some embarrassingly inept work. One reason for this is that De Forest desperately longed for the financial security which the popularity enjoyed by the ruling sentimentalists would give him. At the same time, he was contemptuous of the very public he had to satisfy. He expressed this contempt in a letter to Howells on March 11, 1879: "I don't understand why you and I havn't [sic] sold monstrously except on the theory that our novel-reading public is mainly female or a very juvenile public and wants something nearer its own mark of intellect and taste, as, for instance, 'Helen's Babies' and 'That Husband of Mine.'"[20] In a vain effort to gain popularity, De Forest made concessions to the taste he scorned. The result was a violation of his own artistic integrity, a result he acknowledged when he confessed, in an 1886 letter to Howells, "that I am not always sincerely spoken in my stories."[21]

De Forest never did acquire popularity, but he did display versatility in his quasi-deliberate quest for mediocrity. He produced in Overland (1871) a juvenile, melodramatic western adventure story which he later aptly subtitled, "A Story for Boys."[22] In the anonymous Justine's Lovers (1878), he attempted, as he admitted, "to imitate the ordinary 'woman's novel.'"[23] Similarly, he said of Irene the Missionary (1879), "there is a large public which is interested in missions. I hope that I shall be guessed as a returned missionary, or a lady."[24] His delight in these jejune hoaxes indicates that his original artistic seriousness atrophied when the public failed to respond significantly to his more important novels. I suspect that his final novels were written in an attempt to capitalize on literary fads. It is likely, although I cannot prove it by citing any documentary evidence, that in writing The Bloody Chasm (1881) De Forest was primarily motivated by the public's acceptance of Civil War reconciliation novels and that in writing A Lover's Revolt (1898) he had in mind its current enthusiasm for historical romances.

De Forest's obsession with acceptance in the market-place did not manifest itself only in the novels I have just mentioned. It left its mark on even his best fiction. In the Oviatt interview he explained why his novels contained love plots:

> They used to ask me why I always had a boy and a girl in love in my books, and I used to tell such people

> that it was the only kind of a plot a writer could get the public interested in. I believe that love will always be a principal theme of the novelists, just as it is one of the principal themes of life itself.[25]

The conventional love interest, found in even his most original fiction, is a weakness because it led De Forest to create characters who were wooden in comparison with others in a novel. In his best novels, however, this weakness is not of sufficient magnitude to destroy the success of the work as a whole. There he was able to overcome the limitations of the conventional love story by making it thematically functional and, hence, subservient to his larger aims.

In spite of the lapses in artistry to which I have pointed, De Forest's were the best American novels written between the close of the Civil War and the end of the Grant Administration. It is deplorable that such an achievement could be largely forgotten or obscured, but the ignorance displayed by the reviewer of The Downing Legends is understandable. By 1901, the year of the review, none of his earlier work was in print. While his work had appeared in all the leading journals, he had never been a writer with wide popularity. Nevertheless, he had achieved some fame, as Oviatt claims, but this was confined to a discriminating circle of readers. De Forest ironically noted how limited his appeal had been when, after thanking William Deal Howells for praising him in the February, 1887 issue of Harper's, he added, "Can it be . . . that I was a great man once for a little while, and missed knowing it?"[26] His most vocal champion, Howells continued to press De Forest's claim to lasting recognition. Thus Howells declared De Forest to be "one of the masters of American fiction" whose novels had "commanded for him the admiration of those among his countrymen best fitted to know good work . . . ."[27] One indication of Howells's lack of success in winning wider acclaim for De Forest is that these comments were published in the same year as the condescendingly ignorant review of *The Downing Legends*.

For a lengthy period following De Forest's death on July 17, 1906, it seemed as if his reputation could not be revived among any group of readers, however select. It was not until *Miss Ravenel's Conversion*, the best known of his little-known fictions, was republished in 1939 with a favourable introduction by Gordon Haight that anything vaguely resembling a revival of interest was inaugurated. Most of the ensuing critical discussion has concentrated on that aspect of De Forest's work which had led Howells to praise him as "a realist before realism was named."[28] When Haight himself declared, in *The Literary History of the United States* (1948), that De Forest was "The first American writer to deserve the name realist . . . ,"[29] he stated a bold thesis which tended to confine the scope of later critical analysis. The extent of De Forest's realism thus became central to the investigation of his novels. Critics after Haight argued that his claim was extreme and had to be qualified. Harold H. Kolb, Jr., for example, has stated that, "It is more accurate to see De Forest as a transitional author" because he "uses both realistic and nonrealistic techniques."[30]

If this debate has seemed to limit or even retard De Forest's claim for historical consideration as the first realist, it has also had the positive effect of focusing some attention on the work of a writer Edward Wagenknecht described as "perhaps the most unjustly neglected of all American writers."[31] The result is, as Alfred Appel, Jr. archly but aptly remarked, that "De Forest has belatedly won a place in our literary histories and has been officially recognized as an Unrecognized Writer and precursor of American realism. . . ."[32]

Frank Bergmann feels that it is now probable that De Forest would again have to be reduced to "footnote status" in the literary histories if it were not for the facts that "there is no consensus on the term realism" and that "'De Forest's best work has both historic and artistic importance.'"[33] There is, however, still no agreement on the historic importance of De Forest's work or its artistic quality. Several critics, though, have suggested approaches which are useful in offering a new assessment of De Forest's achievement.

In New England: Indian Summer, 1865-1915, Van Wyck Brooks praises De Forest because "he pictured American scenes and manners, in Connecticut, New York, the South, the West, with a breadth of understanding and a truth to actuality that were certainly unique at the moment."[34] Brooks is definitely correct in admiring De Forest for his "panoramic eye for American manners,"[35] for in one felicitous phrase he has clearly identified a major element of De Forest's art. In his study, John William De Forest (1965), James F. Light follows Brooks's lead with his judgment that, "At his best, De Forest is a novelist of manners . . . ."[36] Like Brooks, he does not support his claim with anything like an argument or extensive analysis designed to reveal precisely what the term means and how it can be applied to De Forest. Light does offer some very good readings of the novels, but they do not stress the distinct concerns of the novelist of manners and do not show particularly how he differs from the novelist in general.

Part of Light's difficulty is no doubt due to the fact that he realizes that De Forest is something more than a novelist of manners. He realizes what Brooks made no note of; that De Forest's temporal settings are as varied as his geographical settings, and that De Forest's panoramic eye was cast nearly as often over the past as on the present. Two of the books alluded to in Brooks's list of locales, for example, are set in the past. The action of Kate Beaumont, De Forest's only novel exclusively about the South, occurs in the ante-bellum period, and that of Overland (1871), his only Western novel, occurs twenty years prior to the book's publication.[37] Furthermore, on two occasions De Forest dealt with even remoter periods, that of the Salem witchcraft delusions of 1692-93 in his first novel, Witching Times, and that of the American Revolutionary War in his last novel, A Lover's Revolt. Arranged according to the chronology of their action, the novels which form this comparatively sweeping temporal panorama constitute, as James W. Gargano has indicated, "a remarkably comprehensive fictional history of America"[38] from the Salem trials to the scandals of Grant's administration.

Because historical and topical events which Light recognizes as "specific national traumatic experiences,"[39] are prominent in most of De Forest's fiction, both Light and Gargano also call him a social historian. The limitations of approaching De Forest as a social historian become apparent when we understand the implications the term "historian" has for the critics. In a survey of De Forest's work, published in the November, 1873 issue of the Atlantic Monthly, Clarence Gordon said of his short tales,

> Many of these are certainly among the very best of our American magazine stories, and a portion of them have, beside their literary merit, value as materials for future history, so admirably do they portray the manner of life, tone of thought, etc., of certain portions of our country; whilst there is a literalness of surroundings--descriptions of scenery, war records, and political influences--that is wonderfully honest.[40]

Using this as the basis for one part of his investigation of De Forest's novels, Philip H. Ford states that, "Almost by definition, a social historian must be at least something of a realist."[41] While there is some latitude suggested by this remark, Ford himself bluntly declares that, "to the extent that De Forest wrote good social history he also wrote realistically."[42] Ford's statement seems to make realism of method or technique (which assumes protean shapes since critics have not agreed about its nature) the criterion for evaluating a novelist as a social historian. In addition, his criterion for success depends on establishing a correspondence between characters and settings in a novel and the people and places in life itself. That is, this test of correspondence necessitates judging a work of art by an external gauge, a task Ford undertakes when he tries to assess how accurately De Forest "mirrors the life of his time."[43]

Such correspondence theories may very well indicate a serious misunderstanding of the relationship between art and life,[44] but what is of more immediate concern in the present discussion is that they can lead to ossified responses to De Forest's art. In its simplest and least objectionable forms, ossification manifests itself in the tendency to praise whatever in fiction seems to possess a degree of factual validity. Thus Ford expends considerable energy in showing that De Forest's characters are accurate as embodiments of actual types. Similarly, he and Light tend to concentrate on details, such as common-place settings, as indicators of merit. In this way they run the risk of becoming trivial. More serious is the hardening of sensibilities which can occur when the correspondence theories are applied to the novelist as if he were really writing history and not fiction. This is evident in the critics' celebration of "objectivity" whenever they discover it. In the criticism of De Forest's work it reveals itself especially in the distaste for humour as a method of social criticism. In particular, Light, Ford, and Gargano have criticized De Forest for using caricatures. Gargano, for example, considers the use of caricature and satire to be a deviation from the control necessary to the serious artist. Thus, he says that De Forest "lapses into caricature and satire" and "loses his artistic restraint and . . . becomes a satirist rather than an objective appraiser of life."[45] The most extreme example of the tendency to become numb to all but a select group of values must be the comments of Stanley T. Williams in the Introduction to De Forest's A Volunteer's Adventures. He applies the correspondence theory with a vengeance when he casually dismisses artistic considerations from his estimate of De Forest's achievement:

> we are not richly repaid, except for the revelation of De Forest's art, for a reading of Kate Beaumont (1872) or Honest John Vane (1875), two of the most engaging of his later novels. In the end, his fame must rest on the descriptions of war in the present text and on those also in Miss Ravenel's Conversion.[46]

To be fair, it must be admitted that Williams does not limit the test of worth to mere surface correspondence for he describes De Forest as "essentially a psychological realist."[47] Thus he says that De Forest's battle descriptions are more successful than his characterizations, which are generally singled out for praise by other critics, because he believes that all De Forest writes about war "has a sharper psychological validity than even his skilful analyses of personality, of, for example, the rather tedious Madame Larue."[48] Williams does not offer any test for determining his degrees of "psychological validity." Instead, his comment expresses again a bias for overtly dramatic correspondences which he seems to find more stimulating than a "tedious" analysis of characters in social situations.

It seems to me, then, that critics who support realism have not done full justice to De Forest's work for two reasons. First, much of their criticism has concentrated on defining De Forest's place in literary history rather than on evaluating his actual achievement. Secondly, their criticism in general commits one to puzzling his way through a maze of elaborate definitions before catching a glimpse of the literary work because there are nearly as many modes or varieties of "realism" as there are critics employing the term.[49] The measurement of De Forest's achievement according to the extent of his realism, then, involves the use of a gauge which itself lacks generally accepted and consistent calibrations.

Having said this, however, I do not wish to convey the impression that Light and Gargano are in any way wrong in regarding De Forest as a social historian. My contention is that they have taken a limited and unnecessarily limiting view of what the term indicates. What I think is needed is a broader view which will enable the critic to perceive the contours of De Forest's work.

I believe that this view can be achieved by recognizing that Clarence Gordon's remark that "There seems to have been a purpose for each tale,"[50] is applicable to all of De Forest's novels. De Forest, that is, was not simply recording society, he was interpreting it. The important thing about De Forest's fictional history is that it reveals him as a constant critic of American society. He used literature to chart the clash of various social and moral forces and, thus, to illustrate his ideas about the nature of American society.

In his brief, provocative analysis of De Forest's work, in Harvests of Change, Jay Martin sees that the structure of De Forest's work derives from this attempt to illustrate such forces:

> Miss Ravenal's [sic] Conversion from Secession to Loyalty (1867) established the pattern for his books; they abound with conflict and contrast; their drama and satisfactions arise from the ways strife is resolved into harmony. North, South, and West--Americans, Mexicans, Europeans, and Orientals; Negroes, immigrants, Indians, Whites; Democrats and Republicans, both honest and corrupt; Puritans, Catholics, rationalists, and debauchees; millennialists and free lovers; the innocent and the experienced; heroes and desperados, saints and sinners, scientists and sensualists, prophets and clowns, lovers and fierce antagonists--all these and more mingle together in DeForest's [sic] novels to

> to be mixed and, by being mixed, to be transformed and reconciled. By bringing such characters, representing conflicting persuasions, together, DeForest [sic] shows how contact, understanding, and, perhaps, love could unite a nation. The America he portrays is defined by diversity driving towards harmony.[51]

I do not agree with Martin's idea that De Forest always portrays "diversity driving towards harmony," but I do consider his identification of a basic pattern in De Forest's work to be an extremely valuable insight. In this study I will pursue it further by showing that a basic pattern of conflict does exist in De Forest's novels as a formal element in his criticism of society. In so doing, I will modify Martin's insight to make it applicable to more than the few novels he mentions.

Arnold Kettle has termed a novel which possesses a pattern because it seems to originate from an idea or moral vision a "moral fable."[52] The essence of the moral fable is that it "illustrates an idea about life."[53] Because De Forest's novels illustrate ideas about life in society, the term "social fable" may be used as a more accurate label for describing his particular set of concerns.

The dangers of the social fable are those Kettle has identified as the dangers of the moral fable in general.[54] Because it seeks to illustrate a social idea, it may seem over-simplified, too rigidly selective, or dishonest in its vision of life. Kettle suggests that the successful fable writer avoids this limitation either by concentrating on a very profound truth or by filling his creation "with the breath and tensions of life."[55]

Martin is wrong factually when he states that the pattern for De Forest's work, the clash of opposing social forces, originated with Miss Ravenel's Conversion (which he mistakenly identifies as De Forest's first novel). The pattern can be readily discerned in his actual first novel, Witching Times. More seriously, he is wrong, I think, when he contends that this pattern ruined De Forest's later novels because he was only able to give it life once.[56] I believe De Forest gave it life in at least three novels by adopting the second tactic mentioned by Kettle. He possessed the means for giving necessary life and additional depth to his social fables because he possessed considerable talent as an acute observer and witty analyst of manners. As I will demonstrate in this study, he employed this talent advantageously to embody his social criticism. This criticism of American society is itself interesting and even significant historically. I will show, however, that De Forest was only successful as a literary artist when he was able to make his novels something more than a schematic of the forces he detected. I will contend, that is, that he was only successful when he was able to utilize the novel of manners as an integral element of his criticism of American society--when the novel of manners and the social fable met and were well met.

The novel of manners has been given an inclusive, but useful definition by James W. Tuttleton:

> By novel of manners I mean a novel in which the manners, social customs, folkways, conventions, traditions, and mores of a given social group at a given time and place play a dominant role in the lives of fictional characters, exert control over their thought and behavior, and constitute a determinant upon the actions in which they are engaged, and in which these manners and customs are detailed realistically--with, in fact a premium upon the exactness of their representation.[57]

The term "manners," which Tuttleton employs without elaboration in his definition, was clarified earlier by Morton L. Ross:

> Manners were thought of (1) as the habitual conduct by which individual character is identified, (2) as the differentia of social station, (3) as the traits which create national character, and (4) as the patterns of behavior which delimit a particular period of time.[58]

If we expand the third point of this list to include traits which create regional character, we will have a more complete catalogue of the concerns of the novelist of manners. This expanded catalogue can then provide an indication of one way in which a novelist of manners could treat the question of American national character even before what Ross calls "the configuration of manners peculiarly American" became "vivid enough to allow the creation of Christopher Newman or to provide a set of manners that could be opposed dramatically to European counterparts."[59]

Like many of his predecessors, De Forest felt that there was not a single uniform configuration of manners which could be utilized as an index of national character. In his essay, "The Great American Novel" (1868), he sadly noted that, "We are a nation of provinces, and each province claims to be the court."[60] Nevertheless, the question of national character, or at least some of its regional or class aspects, was of central importance to his fiction because, as his essay makes clear, he felt that it was only by treating American manners that the novel could be made truly American. For De Forest, therefore, the depiction of manners was not simply a tool of the social critic but a primary responsibility of the American artist.

This concern for the depiction of manners is quite evident in "The Great American Novel." De Forest there succinctly defined his ideal novel as, "the picture of the ordinary emotions and manners of American existence--the American 'Newcomes' of 'Miserables.'" He called for a "tableau of American society . . . resembling the tableaux of English society by Thackeray and Trollope, or the tableaux of French society by Balzac and George Sand." Through a similar representation of social life, the "task of painting the American soul within the framework of a novel"[61] was to be accomplished. De Forest did not amplify his statement to indicate precisely how the representation of surface elements like manners could reveal the soul, or inner nature, of Americans, but his choice of foreign models and his use of the portrait painter analogy are highly suggestive. Obviously he felt that the European writers, by depicting the surface of society, had in fact conveyed its spirit and motivating impulses. De Forest here was anticipating a point Lionel Trilling later made much more explicitly: "The great novelists knew that manners indicate the largest intentions of men's souls as well as the smallest and they are perpetually concerned to catch the meaning of every dim implicit hint."[62] De Forest's portrait analogy, then, reveals a conviction that a complete picture of a person or a society conveys something about the intangible spiritual nature of the subject. He saw manners as one very significant index of spirit, something that would reveal not simply surface personality, but also character, the underlying source of action. He felt, however, that the American novelist had not painted American character except in "the production of a few outlines."[63] In his own attempts to treat social problems and manners, then, De Forest was seeking to alter the course of American literature, to bring the novel back to what Trilling has called its "classic intention," by making it touch "significantly on society, on manners."[64] De Forest did succeed, as I will show in my analysis of his major novels, in making his work touch "significantly on society, on manners," but the extent of his influence on others is difficult to establish. I do, however, think that it is a reasonable assumption that he did provide some kind of example for Howells, Twain, Crane, and, possibly, although in a different way, James, who probably knew at least some of his work.[65] If this is the case, then De Forest can be credited with leading the way to the new vigour and seriousness which fiction, after being mired in sentimental triviality for almost twenty years, began to display in the 1880's.

In any case, De Forest's portrait analogy is a useful device for visualizing his achievement in bringing his own fiction back to this classic intention. As Clarence Gordon noted, De Forest can often be thought of "as a Hogarth with a pen."[66] Like Hogarth's, his art concentrated on a view of man as a being influenced and even created by his social and physical environment. Like Hogarth, he painted broad canvases which in design embodied a vision and dramatized a criticism of society. Like Hogarth, he used comic wit, sometimes of a rather macabre nature, to intensify his criticism. Like Hogarth, he depicted manners in order to criticize society and the manners themselves. As a social critic, De Forest was committed to depicting social forces but, because of his Hogarthian awareness of manners, he created dynamic canvases of social interaction rather than static tableaux of those forces.

We can analyse this achievement in literary terms as one result of the imperatives of the novel of manners. Tuttleton notes that "manners represent the expression, in positive and negative form, of the assumptions of society at a given time and place." Thus, he says, "the novel of manners is primarily concerned with social conventions as they impinge upon character."[67] In order to employ manners extensively in a novel, then, De Forest was compelled to pay specific attention to the individual's involvement in society and the effect of that involvement on character. This imperative of the novel of manners complemented his aims as a social fabulist. On the one hand, the social fable is concerned with ideas which can be illustrated through a significant pattern of action. It employs characters as symbols or types of various ideas. On the other hand, the novel of manners, in so far as it is concerned with social ideas, is concerned with those which can be discerned through the description of human customs, conventions, and mores. It may employ characters as types of a particular class or station, or it may use them as individuals. In both cases, however, the novelist of manners is treating human beings and not abstract concepts. His primary concern, that is, is with life and people, not concepts and allegorical embodiments. In De Forest's case, the novel of manners allowed him to give the characters in his best novels life as well as meaning. It prevented his fictional embodiment of forces in the social fable from becoming a blatant contrivance. An appreciation of the complementary functioning of social fable and novel of manners, I believe, is essential to a just evaluation of De Forest's achievement. The intention of this study, therefore, is to demonstrate specifically and in detail, through an analysis of De Forest's more important novels, the nature and method of this achievement.

The case which this study will argue can be succinctly stated: De Forest was successful as a literary artist only when he combined and thus made interdependent the social fable and the novel of manners. The social fable thus gave form to the novel of manners while the novel of manners gave life to the fable.

I will focus on De Forest's first novel, Witching Times, in Chapter Two in order to demonstrate his failure to fuse this social fable with a complementary and vivifying study of manners. In Chapter Three I will, in a sense, reverse this procedure by analysing his failure to give three novels of manners complementary and controlling social fables. The next three chapters will analyse in chronological order his best and most important work, the work upon which his enduring reputation must depend. I do not believe that De Forest should be known primarily as an historical curiosity, or as an early realist, or as that even stranger creature, a transitional writer. Through my readings of his major novels I wish to establish that he was fundamentally something which historically-minded critics have generally neglected to insist upon--a literary artist.

Notes

[1] "John De Forest in New Haven," New York *Times* Saturday Supplement, 17 Dec. 1898, p. 856.

[2] Quoted by James F. Light, *John William De Forest*, Twayne's United States Authors Series, 82 (New York: Twayne, 1965), p. 169.

[3] Wilcomb E. Washburn, Introduction to De Forest's *History of the Indians of Connecticut* (1851; facsimile rpt. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1964), n. pag.

[4] Washburn quotes De Forest's complaint, in a 9 Dec. 1852 letter to his brother Andrew, that without command of Latin "I cannot accomplish any historical work because I cannot examine one full third of the materials on which that work must be founded."

[5] Light, p. 37.

[6] 29 Dec. 1853. Quoted by Light, p. 37. De Forest's next sentence indicates that prose was not an important area of concern: "When the time comes, if it ever does, then I will resume prose, and think that I can live by it."

[7] Light, p. 39.

[8] Ibid.

[9] John W. De Forest, *European Acquaintance* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1858), p. 167.

[10] Light, p. 40.

[11] David M. Potter, "John William De Forest," *New Haven Colony Historical Society Papers*, 10 (1951), 195.

[12] Joseph Jay Rubin, Introduction to De Forest's *Kate Beaumont* (1872; rpt. State College, Pennsylvania, 1963), p. 8.

[13] Quoted by Rubin, p. 8.

[14] "Charleston Under Arms," *Atlantic Monthly*, 7 (1861), 505.

[15] In their Introduction to De Forest's *A Union Officer in the Reconstruction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. xxiv, James H. Croushore and David Morris quote from De Forest's November, 1855 letter to his brother Andrew in which he declared that the Southern blacks "are not worth all the hul[l]abaloo that is made about them.

They are kept ignorant and animal, say the abolitionists. Granted. But their great, great grandfathers, in Africa were four times as ignorant and at least twice as animal. . . . So much for my present feeling and ideas with regard to slavery. They may change on further observation."

[16] Quoted by Light, p. 42.

[17] "Campaigning," *Poems: Medley and Palestina* (New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor Company, 1902), p. 6.

[18] Preface, *Medley and Palestina*, n. pag.

[19] De Forest hoped to reshape his articles into a two volume book, *Military Life*. This was not published during his life, but two volumes based on his preparations have now been published. They are *A Volunteer's Adventures*, ed. James H. Croushore, with introduction by Stanley T. Williams (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946) and *A Union Officer in the Reconstruction*.

[20] Quoted by Light, p. 108.

[21] Ibid., p. 166.

[22] Ibid., p. 115.

[23] Ibid., p. 153.

[24] Ibid., p. 108.

[25] Oviatt, p. 856.

[26] Light, p. 167.

[27] *Heroines of Fiction* (New York and London: Harper's, 1901), II, 162.

[28] "Editor's Study," *Harper's*, 74 (1887), 484.

[29] "Realism Defined: William Dean Howells," *LHUS*, ed. Robert E. Spiller, Willard Thorp, Thomas H. Johnson, Henry Seidel Canby, and Richard M. Ludwig, 3rd ed., rev. (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 881.

[30] *The Illusion of Life* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1969), p. 139.

[31] *Cavalcade of the American Novel* (New York: Holt, 1952), p. 104.

[32] Introduction to De Forest's *Witching Times* (New

Haven: College and University Press, 1967), p. 7.

[33] The Worthy Gentleman of Democrary (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitatsverlag, 1971), p. 10. Bergmann is here quoting Light's Preface.

[34] Literature in New England (Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1944), p. 240.

[35] Ibid., p. 241.

[36] Light, p. 177.

[37] Bergmann, p. 62, n. 11.

[38] James William Gargano, "John William De Forest: A Critical Study of His Novels," Diss. Cornell 1955, p. 364.

[39] Light, p. 177.

[40] "De Forest's Novels," Atlantic, 32 (1873), 611.

[41] Philip Hastings Ford, "The Techniques of John William De Forest, Transitional Novelist," Diss. Ohio State 1953, p. 97.

[42] Ibid., p. 17.

[43] Ibid.

[44] The mirror image is, of course, a common one among those who view realism as representation. Damian Grant, Realism, The Critical Idiom, 9 (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 65, attacks the limitations of this way of thinking: "The surface of a book, be it small or large, cannot usefully be thought of as a mirror; it is not a matter of 'disproportion' between life and book, but of different modes of being, to whose subtle relation the simple image of reflection is manifestly inadequate."

[45] Gargano, p. 370.

[46] Introduction, A Volunteer's Adventures, p. vi.

[47] Ibid., p. ix.

[48] Ibid., p. vi.

[49] See Grant, p. 1.

[50] Gordon, 611.

[51] Jay Martin, Harvests of Change (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey; Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 31.

[52] Arnold Kettle, *An Introduction to the English Novel*, I (London: Hutchinson, 1951), 17.

[53] Ibid., 18.

[54] Ibid., 18-19.

[55] Ibid., 19.

[56] Martin, p. 35.

[57] James W. Tuttleton, *The Novel of Manners in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 10.

[58] "'Manners': An Addition to a Vocabulary for American Studies," *Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association*, 22 (March, 1968), 17.

[59] Ibid., 19-20.

[60] "The Great American Novel," *The Nation*, 6 (9 Jan. 1868), 29.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Lionel Trilling, "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," *The Liberal Imagination* (1950; rpt. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), p. 206.

[63] "The Great American Novel," 27.

[64] Trilling, p. 207.

[65] There is no doubt that Howells had knowledge of De Forest's work. Howells reviewed four of his novels in the *Atlantic*, mentioned De Forest in five "Editor's Study" columns in *Harper's*, analysed *Kate Beaumont* in an article in *Harper's Bazaar* which was reprinted in his *Heroines of Fiction*, and referred to his work in *My Literary Passions* (1895), *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* (1900), and *Literature and Life* (1902). Light, p. 167, quotes from a letter Howells wrote to De Forest on 9 Dec. 1886, in which he admits De Forest's influence: "it was your bold grappling with the fact of the robust lives . . . of our nation that gave me the courage to deal with it in Lemuel and 'Modern Instance.' It's odd that no one touched it before you." The case for De Forest's influence on the other writers is uncertain. Walter Blair, *Mark Twain and Huck Finn* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), pp. 218-19, 225, 234-35, suggests that *Kate Beaumont* may have been a source for the Grangerford-Sheperdson feud. Thomas F. O'Donnell, "DeForest [sic], Van Petten, and Stephen Crane,"

American Literature, 27 (1956), 578-80, tries to give a factual basis for Gordon Haight's assertion in his Introduction to De Forest's *Miss Ravenel's Conversion* (1867; rpt. New York: Rinehart, 1955), p. xvii, that "There is no doubt that Crane knew De Forest's battle scenes. . . ." O'Donnell suggests that De Forest's fellow-soldier and Crane's teacher, Van Petten, would have recommended De Forest's novel to Crane. Henry James reviewed *Honest John Vane* in *The Nation*, 19 (1874), 441-42, and may have been the author of a review of *Playing the Mischief* in *The Nation*, 21 (1875), 106. Since neither review was very favourable, one would have to say that James may have regarded De Forest's work only as an example of avoidable errors. Nevertheless, Robert Falk, *The Victorian Mode in American Fiction, 1865-1885*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1965), pp. 155-56, draws some interesting parallels between *Miss Ravenel's Conversion* and *The Bostonians* which suggest that De Forest may have had a very subtle influence on James in that De Forest provided an example of the American artist's ability to grapple with American life boldly.

[66] Gordon, 612.

[67] Tuttleton, p. 12.

CHAPTER II

MINOR FICTION: WITCHING TIMES AND DE FOREST'S HISTORICAL NOVELS

In his indispensable study, The Quest for Nationality (1957), Benjamin Spencer says that, between the end of the War of 1812 and the beginning of the Civil War, "the tide of literary nationalism was at the full."[1] This nationalism led to repeated demands for a native literature expressing American feelings and celebrating American life. Even earlier, in the Preface to the 1802 edition of The Algerine Captive, Royall Tyler declared that America needed two things; "that we write our own books of amusement, and that they exhibit our own manners."[2] As simple as Tyler's formula for a native literature seems now, the demand for the exhibition of American manners proved frustrating for nineteenth-century authors. They felt that America lacked the traditional indices of social worth and stratification which made possible the English novel of manners. The frequently cited lists of deficiencies in this respect offered by Cooper, Hawthorne, and James are only the most famous expressions of a pervasive belief in the poverty of American materials. This belief led Cooper to declare that "It would be indeed a desperate undertaking, to think of making anything interesting in the way of a Roman de Société in this country. . . ."[3]

De Forest's essay, "The Great American Novel" (1868), is a variation on such expressions of frustration. Like many others, De Forest felt that his society was not stable enough to provide the framework for an exhibition of manners. The American author, he complained, is beset with the impossible task of painting "this continental infant of American society, who is changing every year not only in physical attributes, but in the characteristics of his soul." Unlike Cooper, Hawthorne, and James, who emphasized the poverty of American materials, De Forest viewed the major difficulty as one compounded by abundance: "And then there is such variety and even such antagonism in the component parts of this cataract." De Forest then made the traditional comparison of his plight with the situation of the English novelist:

> When Mr. Anthony Trollope commences a novel, he is perplexed by no such kaleidoscopic transformations and no such conflicting claims of sections. Hundreds of years ago English aristocracy assumed the spiritual nature which it holds with little change to the present day. It had made its code of honor; it had established its relations with the mass of the nation; it had become the model for all proper Englishmen. At this time it is a unit of social expression throughout the kingdom. . . . There you have something fixed to point; there you have the novelist's sitter; there you have his purchaser.[4]

It is little wonder that he wrote Howells on June 21, 1874, that "We are all incomplete novelists together, much perplexed by the difficulty of making a democratic society picturesque, and doomed perhaps to spend our lives in laying foundations for posterity to build upon."[5]

The usual response to "the difficulty of making a democratic society picturesque" was the writing of romances. Ante-bellum authors who may have originally avoided the attempt to write novels of manners because of American social conditions, were supported in their decision by the prevailing literary theory. They generally accepted the concept of the hierarchy of literary genres,[6] believing that the romance was a higher form than the novel of manners and that it permitted a greater exercise of the imagination.[7]

James Fenimore Cooper's The Spy (1821), a romance of the Revolutionary War, established confidence that the historical romance in particular could meet the demands for a native literature. In 1822, for instance, W. H. Gardiner declared in The North American Review that Cooper "has laid the foundations of American romance, and is really the first who has deserved the appellation of a distinguished American novel writer."[8] Gardiner, John Neal, William Gilmore Simms, James Kirke Paulding, and others pressed the claims of the historical romance by declaring that each epoch of the young republic's history offered the romancer opportunities for treating distinctly American material. Given these repeated claims, the high esteem for the romance itself, and the immense popularity of

Scott's and, later, Cooper's works, it was almost inevitable that the zeal to be both picturesque and uniquely American led many authors to populate the past with hosts of heroes and heroines.

It is not unusual then that De Forest, who had previously been engaged in the scholarly study of history, should begin his career as a novelist by treating an historical subject, the Salem witch trials. This subject had been quite popular among nationalists searching for American material, but most of its treatments had been, according to Alfred Appel, Jr., "undistinguished, if not unfortunate."[9] What is unusual is that De Forest did not follow the example of so many of the popular romancers who used history primarily as a vehicle for making basically improbable heroic actions acceptable. De Forest's Witching Times stands apart from other works treating this subject because it is, as G. Harrison Orians has declared, "By far the fullest treatment of Salem witchcraft. . . . the only fictional treatment which covers the entire period of the Salem distresses, and provides a comprehensible and psychological account of actors, scenes, and motives in that mad delusion."[10] The fact that Witching Times does so obviously stand apart from previous fictional accounts of Salem suggests that even at the beginning of his career De Forest did not regard history and historical events as a way of avoiding the difficulty of treating American social life. It indicates, rather, that he saw definite ways in which history could serve the needs of the novelist of manners and the social fabulist.

The choice of an historical setting gave De Forest precisely what he envied in Trollope, "something fixed to paint." The customs, conventions, and mores of the past were no longer undergoing the "kaleidoscopic transformations" which perplexed him when he looked at contemporary society. Because they were stable they could be more easily portrayed and analysed. Furthermore, they provided him with an opportunity to compare, implicitly or explicitly, the manners of the past and those of the present in order to gauge the nature of historical change. Finally, the portrayal of manners of a remote age could give him something of the "picturesque" quality he mentioned in his letter to Howells.

Historical events and situations also served the needs of De Forest as a social fabulist. First of all, they possessed a built-in dramatic appeal which could permit an entertaining treatment of ideas. Secondly, they had known shapes--beginnings, middles, ends--which could provide a basic narrative structure for the fictional analysis of society. Finally, they put into bold relief the major issues and ideologies in conflict within American society at a given time. By this I mean that an historical over-view was likely to allow him a clearer perception of issues and ideologies then he could find when he looked at what he called the "cataract" of contemporary life.

Although historical events and situations could provide De Forest with the advantages of drama, basic shape, and clearly defined issues, each advantage held out a potential danger. De Forest had to exert stern artistic control over each of these elements if he wished to integrate a good social fable with a vivifying study of manners. He did not always do this in his historical fiction. He sometimes gave one of these aspects such overwhelming emphasis that he weakened or destroyed either the social fable or the study of manners.

The dramatic potential of temporally remote settings can obviously be a fatal lure. The freedom from comparison with actuality, one of the great appeals of the romance form for writers like Cooper and Hawthorne, can lead a writer to give in to the adventure imperatives of the popular melodramatic romance. When this happens, attention becomes centered on action and adventure for their own sake. The action in some of De Forest's works failed for this reason to contribute to the social fable. The action did not, that is, constitute an extension of the illustration of a significant idea about society. Another danger is that character, which is the life of a study of manners, becomes subordinated to event.

De Forest failed entirely to control this dramatic potential in Overland (1871), an interminable series of incredible and purposeless western adventures. His analysis of manners here, confined as it is to brief interludes between struggles against the land, the Indians, and desperadoes, is so limited that it never gives significant life to any of the characters. He did not always give in so completely to temptation, but episodes like Rachel More's melodramatic prison break in _Witching Times_, which I will elaborate on later, and Abner Sly's military adventures in _A Lover's Revolt_, also reveal this lack of restraint.

The danger in employing a given shape is that it can force the author to fit characters into it as animated concepts. Characters must, of course, embody some concept if they are to function in a social fable, but when the concept becomes too emphatic, it can become a bully throttling the life out of the character who must contain it. This is particularly evident in _The Bloody Chasm_ where the danger can be seen in an extreme form. De Forest's basic shape for his action was provided by the historical situation following the Civil War. The South had been defeated but continued to feel intensely bitter towards the North. As time passed and as the South began to grow more prosperous, it seemed as if the hostility were being blunted. De Forest at least hoped that the South would eventually embrace the North in a true union. The basic elements in the shape of this situation then were hostility, defeat, bitterness, prosperity, and acceptance of union. De Forest did not, however, choose to convey this shape of events by dramatizing the initial conflicts as those between people possessing different social and political ideas. Instead, he took a simpler and more obvious approach. He created an allegory of Reconstruction, a love story in which the South is the woman and the North is her suitor. The result is that his historical shape is conveyed by ideas half-heartedly disguised as people.

De Forest repeatedly and awkwardly insists upon the allegorical shape and thus the conceptual value of the characters in The Bloody Chasm. In describing the interview between Silas Mather, an aging Boston puritan and patriot, and Virginia Beaufort, a young and bitter South Carolinian, he declares, for example, that "The two antagonistic ideas of American politics faced each other angrily in the person of this sickly old man and this passionate, impoverished orphan."[11] The military images which cluster around the attempts of Frank Underhill, Mather's nephew, to make Virginia love a Northerner are sufficient to make the shape apparent, but De Forest, who seems to consider his readers obtuse on this point, belabours it into a patent allegory. Therefore, he continues to insist through various mouthpieces that Virginia is the "image of rebeldom" (47) and "'a desperate case for reconstruction'" (55), and that in her behaviour she is "'just like the whole South'" (276). He most deliberately drops a boot on the floor to waken his readers when he has Underhill passionately declare, after he has married Virginia in a funereal church service, "'I will win her as surely as the North won the South.'" His friend Hilton, then explains that "'You are the North incarnate.'" When Underhill immediately chimes in with, "'And my wife is the South,'" Hilton, not to be outdone I suppose, needlessly elaborates by saying that Virginia is "'a generous and impassioned woman. The South has been just that, and only that, all my lifetime'" (145). Such repetitive and insistent declarations of the conceptual value of the characters and allegorical shape of the action absolutely overwhelm the portrayal of manners. The central characters are so clearly the North and the South, they can rarely be a Northerner and a Southerner.

The danger presented by clearly defined issues is somewhat similar to the danger presented by a given shape. In both cases, characters tend to become concepts rather than human beings. When issues govern, characters who represent positions the novelist wishes to attack may not be just allegorical figures. These characters may be reduced to caricatures of both the concepts they represent and human beings. When characters who embody concepts which the novelist supports are given, in comparison, too much humanity, a jarring inconsistency which can ruin the work may result.

This problem is evident in A Lover's Revolt where a shrill chauvinism directs the portrayal of manners. In his verse Sequel to this novel, De Forest indicates that he means to treat the historical situation, the opening of the Revolutionary War, as a social fable illustrating an idea about contemporary American society. There he declares that Americans are still cultural colonists and must begin another revolution to gain possession of their souls. His didactic intent is signalled in the novel proper by his insistence on his characters as symbols of concepts. He describes, for example, a dinner at which the intimidated colonists fawn over their guest, an aristocratic British officer. He explicitly indicates the symbolic value of the scene: "They represent the colony in face of the mother country. They are cowed by an Englishman, cowed by the royal uniform, cowed by the thought of lordly blood. In the bearing of these good people there is all the reverence of the province for the birthland, and no little of the immemorial flunkeyism of the race toward nobility."[12] This scene could have been the occasion for an interesting and penetrating analysis of manners as indices of national character. De Forest, however, does not use manners here to clothe his concepts with social reality, but rather to attach crude labels which indicate his attitudes towards them. He describes Uncle Fenn, for example, as "simpering like a Chinese joss" and as opening his "bootlicking mouth" (17) to speak. Later he says "Uncle Fenn managed to grovel and fawn his way into the dialogue" (18) and, when he describes him as laughing at one of the officer's jokes, he says he "nearly went into a bootlicking apoplexy" (22).

This grovelling and ridiculous creature, who is absolutely devoid of all psychological plausibility is, then, merely a symbol. He is the "incarnation of perishing loyalism" (412) and De Forest treats him in extreme form as a caricature in order to demolish what he represents.

In contrast, De Forest does provide some psychological plausibility for his hero, Ash Farnlee. In some scenes, such as the preposterous encounter between Farnlee and Moorcastle, who has caught him spying in Boston, it is true that Farnlee is too much the stock hero of historical melodrama to be successful. Still, he generally has more credibility than Uncle Fenn. De Forest, for example, describes Farnlee's anger and resentment at the dinner I have mentioned as the reaction of a human being, not of a caricature. He then shows convincingly how resentment at being treated as an inferior because he is a colonial increases Farnlee's resentment until only political independence can heal his wounded feelings. In addition, he pays minute attention to Farnlee's behaviour in his first military engagements, noting his fright, his anger, his callousness, his elation.

This kind of attention gives A Lover's Revolt the little merit it possesses. It gives life to the historical world in which Farnlee operates as a symbol of the American spirit. This world, however, is too sober and too substantial for the comical and cardboard Uncle Fenn to inhabit without calling it all into question. When he is on the stage, history is not a context for the clash of ideas, but a crudely painted backdrop for it. In his fervour as a social fabulist, De Forest wants Uncle Fenn to be detested because he wants to idealize the revolutionary spirit. His attitude is thus designed to prepare for the final symbolic and celebratory scene where Uncle Fenn "'dies like an empire in convulsions'" (413) while Ash Farnlee rides past with "his black eyes sparkling and his dark aquiline face flushed with triumph, an incarnation of the coming republic" (416). By making the novelist of manners his vassal, however, the social fabulist has opted for a simplistically chauvinistic expression of issues and neglected the sense of life which might have given sophisticated emotional conviction to the celebration. Patriots may cherish the sentiment of the social fable in A Lover's Revolt, but only very juvenile ones could argue that the portrayal of manners succeeds in giving life to De Forest's ideas.

I have thus far suggested that De Forest differed from most of his predecessors because he used history as a means for touching significantly on society and on manners. I have also briefly indicated that historical subjects and situations presented aesthetic dangers--dangers to the successful integration of social fables and studies of manners--which De Forest did not always avoid. I have used as examples, however, only De Forest's most blatant failures. Frankly, the novels I have mentioned, Overland, The Bloody Chasm, and A Lover's Revolt, have little significance except to the student of De Forest's erratic career. My case that De Forest was only successful when he integrated the social fable and the novel of manners can, however, be supported by a much more significant work, Witching Times. Besides its significance as the best nineteenth-century treatment of Salem witchcraft, Witching Times has definite literary merit and this makes it of interest to more than the limited number of De Forest scholars.

In Witching Times De Forest employs the Salem hysteria to shape a social fable.[13] The plot, in which the central character, Henry More, is executed well before the end of the novel, divides this social fable into two related parts. The first part is a prominent and powerful fable complemented by a vivifying portrayal of More's manners. The second part, however, reveals De Forest's failure to avoid entirely some of the aesthetic dangers I have mentioned. In his eagerness to indicate an attitude towards the issues he is presenting, he resorts to inappropriate displays of manners. The caricatures of Bowson and Elder Parris which he creates are acceptable in a comedy of manners, but they do not meet the demands of this particular social fable. De Forest also fails in the second part to sustain his initial success when he succumbs to the temptations of the conventional romantic adventure story. For these reasons, he does not succeed in completely fusing his social fable and novel of manners and Witching Times must be accounted, at best, only a partial literary success.

The first part of the social fable details what the narrator calls a "contest between a man and a community."[14] Henry More, an aristocrat of superior education, intellect, manners, and abilities, is here pitted against the provincial and narrow Salem society which is led by a group of selfish ministers. De Forest presents this contest as an example of the tragedy which occurs when society refuses to be guided by a man who stands for reason and moderation and, instead, follows the guidance of morally and intellectually inferior leaders who manipulate it for their own ends. The demand made by this fable is that American society must reject the leadership of unworthy demagogues, like Parris, and must free itself from the mental shackles they forge. It must then accept the gentlemanly ideals of rational humanism which More advocates. The fable illustrates that, unless it does this, society will remain retrograde because injustice and intolerance will prevail. Although the novel is set in the colonial period, then, this fable articulates the same kind of problems treated by Cooper in his studies of American democracy. De Forest is not totally uncritical of Henry More, but he, like Cooper, does make a case for the gentleman as the only reliable and moral leader of a democratic society.

De Forest makes this fable interesting and prevents it from becoming too much of a mechanical allegory by successfully combining it with the depiction of manners. This depiction gives his fable a certain concreteness as narrative history. It enables him to show that intellectual, material, and personal considerations, as well as religious beliefs, played a major part in the Salem hysteria. He indicates, that is, that certain social conditions and customs--the habitual deference to the opinions of those who, like the clergy, possessed superior rank and prestige; the uneventful and sober nature of social intercourse; and the ingrained preoccupation with witchcraft--were forces which conditioned the people to accept the delusion.

In the first part of the novel, the social fable and the depiction of manners are completely integrated because Henry More's downfall is central to both. In terms of the fable, More is a martyr for the cause of rationality and truth, and thus, the victim-hero of an ironic tragedy. By this I mean that his death is not the result of either a deliberate or accidental opposition to the moral law as in most classical tragedies, but the direct result of opposing the community by advocating "'principles of moderation'" (107). He dies, in other words, precisely because he supports the moral order and tells the truth about the witchcraft phenomena. In trying to demonstrate the natural causes of the manifestation as disease and trickery, as products of what the ignorant Mrs. Parris declares in a significantly mispronounced phrase to be "'sinvisible agents'" (47), he earns the enmity of the community's leaders, especially Elder Parris and Cotton Mather, who must destroy him to maintain their selfish hold on power.

The values More represents in the social fable are made prominent because they are contrasted with those represented by his chief antagonists, the clergymen. The ministers are united as "fellows in violence and selfishness and error" (325). De Forest shows that in promoting the delusion Noyse, Parris, and Mather are motivated, respectively, by lust, by hate, and by ambition (325). Essentially, however, each represents power corrupted by passion. The fable shows that such selfish leaders are evil because instead of regulating society they unleash primitive forces which then control and bestialize it. The ministers' vices are direct denials of the very virtues which they should promote, faith, hope, and charity. Especially because they lack the last of these, which De Forest, in the novel's final paragraph, emphasizes as necessary for leaders, the ministers are guilty, as More charges, of combining "'cruelty toward man with blasphemy toward God'" (227). The superstition they promote is, therefore repeatedly referred to as Juggernaut, the Indian idol which was dragged through the streets in a giant car under the wheels of which many devotees were reputed to have immolated themselves. The ministers are seen as pushing society backwards into worship of a "great, greedy, gory-mouthed idol" (172) which screams loudly for blood sacrifices.

In the social fable More commits no error: he dies because he insists on maintaining the truth. In the novel of manners, however, More dies because of his social hamartia. Introduced as one displaying "that fluent courtesy which generally belongs to a man accustomed to elegant life" (35) and later described as "courteous by habit to women and the clergy" (134), he loses his sense of decorum as he becomes increasingly impatient with the obstinancy and ignorance of those who support the witchcraft trials. Finally, he is "baited . . . into savageness" (148) by the severe pressure of circumstances and his manners become so intemperate that he turns the entire community against him.

More is offered as a superior man and his tragic transformation is the result of his frustration at not being able to govern or even much influence the opinions and actions of lesser men. His inability to do so, however, is directly related to his superiority. De Forest cleverly establishes the frustrating irony of a man disqualified from influencing his community precisely because of his abilities through a contrast of More's manners and his community's. Since this contrast is a sign of De Forest's skill as a novelist of manners and strengthens the impact of More's tragedy, I shall briefly discuss it before I proceed with an analysis of More's transformation.

De Forest's portrait of More emphasizes the uniqueness which isolates More from the rest of the community and makes his efforts to end the delusion futile. This isolation is symbolized by More's dwelling, a cabin three miles out of Salem, which he tries to make "significant of baronial glories" (51). More importantly, it is demonstrated repeatedly by his manners which prove him tempermentally unable to fit in fully with the customs of Salem society. Vigorous in mind and body, he sits uneasily in his chair during the sober and quiet Puritan Sabbath (49). Believing in the Greek concept of a sound mind in a vigorous body, he encourages the Salem youth to participate in games and sports. These activities are in some ways subversive, for the narrator says that More may have regarded them as a way of "gradually sweating out of them those bilious doctrines of witchcraft, election, and original sin" (168). They do become objectionable with the outbreak of the delusion, for the religious segment of society regards them as wastes of time and displays of vanity. More, however, continues to oppose local customs because he persists in encouraging a revival of the Olympic spirit.

More is further isolated by his intellectual vigour. While the orthodox Salemites read books on witchcraft, he studies the classics, particularly his ancestor's Utopia.

While they let their minds become prey to superstitious terrors, his mind makes plans for the utopian estate he hopes to found in the wilderness and formulates schemes for civilizing the Indians.

More's religious opinions also isolate him from this community in which orthodox Calvinism is as much a social condition as a religious doctrine. More is "skeptical by contrast with the rigid, implacable orthodoxy of that period" (128), and he antagonizes all by displaying his skepticism. He enters the struggle against the orthodox "with characteristic enthusiasm and energy" and is continually disputing with them "boldly, obstinately, and angrily" (128). Here the bitter irony of his situation becomes apparent. It is this uniqueness as a rationalist who does not belong to any church and persists in interpreting the Bible "after a mild and humane fashion" (128) which, while enabling him to offer opposition to the hysteria, ostracizes him from the community and disqualifies him from any meaningful role in leading it:

> The very reasons why he was not a believer in the delusion disabled him from offering any successful opposition to it. Had he been orthodox and devout, he might have been listened to; but, in that case he would probably have sided with the orthodox and devout majority. He was latitudinarian and indifferent; and so almost all good men regarded him with coldness, while those who favored him were apt to be the worst characters--people who neglected church, and hated the clergy; sneerers at the Bible as well as scoffers at witchcraft; heretics, godless strangers, and dissolute sailors (131).

It is this social context which makes inevitable and understandable More's transformation from a naturally courteous aristocrat who is well-respected because the "vigorous respect for blood" was at the time "a universal sentiment, and constituted the most important spirit-level of society" (35) to a man who is almost universally loathed.

More begins to change because of his personal dislike for the power of the ignorant Cockney minister, Elder Parris. Parris had tried to get More to join his congregation because he thought that a man of More's station would function as a visible reproach to those who criticized his troubled ministry. More, who privately expresses the opinion that Parris is "'a pretentious blockhead, so full of himself that he is empty of everything else'" (55), does attend one of his services. During it, the minister's daughter, Elizabeth, displays signs of possession. While most of the congregation are awed and frightened, More stares with the "settled and reconciled sneer" (63) which becomes a characteristic feature of his manners whenever he is among the witchcraft believers. While Parris pours out "a torrent of sour and curdled piety, of misapplied learning, of infinite credulity, of savage, persistent imprecation," More listens with "pent-up indignation" (64). After the service he provokes Parris by his sarcasm and "perceptible sneer" (65) when he rightly suggests that Parris has contributed to the suffering of the afflicted by beating them. This earns him the continued hostility of Parris. Shortly afterwards, Parris leads the denunciations of More's lack of belief and prevents More from establishing that teeth marks on Elizabeth Parris's arms are not products of "manifestations" but self-inflicted bites. Angered, More delivers a "reckless speech:" "'If you will blind yourselves, may the devil blind you'" (67). This is the first of several outbursts, ominous in their prophetic quality, which cement public feeling against him.

More's outbursts and other intemperate acts are the result of the pressure of circumstance on character and manners. De Forest therefore employs them as an index of the intense frustration felt by a proud man engaged in a futile struggle. Their significance, however, goes beyond the way in which they fulfill the needs of the novelist of manners.

More's outbursts and intemperate acts complement and give life to the social fable. In each case, the outburst or intemperate act follows closely upon, or is part of, More's attempt to show that "'grave and good men'" are "'put upon by fanatics and tricksters'" (111) and that the trials are "'tragedies of delusion'" (118). These instances of opposition are fundamental to the social fable and make More increasingly the spokesman of reason and justice. The close rendition of manners, which complicates and humanizes him, prevents him from becoming an allegorical figure. In fact, De Forest brilliantly establishes a meaningful tension in More's character and, therefore, in his dual role as centre of the fable and the study of manners. This is the tension between the ideal and the actual, between what a person can be and what he is at the present moment. Its psychological validity is a powerful pull on our sympathies for More: we identify with him because most of us feel that in our own lives our ideal and actual selves differ. At the same time, it alerts us to the need for judgment. More's role in the fable is a norm and tension between it and his role in the novel of manners signals a violation of it. Thus, this tension forces us to sympathize with More as an individual while we simultaneously evaluate him according to the strictest standards he himself voices.

This psychologically effective tension in Witching Times develops because More increasingly becomes the spokesman of reason and moderation in the fable, but he also becomes so frustrated as an individual that he is unable to be the representative of those virtues. His own lack of moderation becomes a force which leads to the tragic defeat of both his cause and himself because it fuels the animosity of those whom he wants to convince. Through this tension, then, De Forest presents a man whose flawed manners become the greatest enemy of his noble ideals.

While its most immediate impact may be psychological, this tension also enriches the theme. In the fable, More is effective in articulating the need for reason and moderation in society and the need for the man of excellence to lead society against all who would oppose this progress. The study of manners, however, reveals More's strategy in presenting his truth to be definitely wrong. Since More does not govern his emotions well, he displays the very problem he attacks in his fellow citizens and damages his case. More is thus a cautionary figure indicating the need for even the best of men to display charity. This theme complements that of the social fable. Together they constitute the grand theme of Witching Times, that the highest reason is the practice of charity.

The tension between the ideal and the actual does not destroy the unity of More's portrait. When he enters the arena to battle the delusion, we can discern the two elements of his presentation. First, we see that his fight is noble, that he does champion reason and moderation by trying to stop the excesses of delusion. He is, then, an embodiment of an idea in a social fable. Secondly, we see that his frustration makes him a rash and abrasive individual. His manners are an index of his personal frustration and, thus, he operates in the study of manners to reveal the effect of circumstantial pressure on personality. The combination of both elements makes More something of a paradox, an intemperate spokesman for reason. But De Forest's success is such that we cannot regard this paradoxical character as an aesthetic failure. The union of social fable and study of manners creates a satisfying portrait of a noble, but fiery individual.

My contention that there is such a satisfying integration of social fable and study of manners can, finally, be illustrated by examining the scenes in which More attacks the witchcraft hysteria.

At the first of the executions, the hanging of Goody Bishop, More's manners reveal his disdain for the people he cannot convert to his position. Thus, he converses with Cotton Mather "in his tone of almost imperceptible sarcasm" (120). More's feelings of impotence are signalled by growing anger. Mather's obnoxious vanity and desire to reestablish the reign of the ministers lead More first to the tactless declaration "'that a country priest-governed is a country ill-governed'" (122). Increasing anger then leads him to attack the absurdity of the proceedings "with great savageness" (122). Finally, More becomes nearly hysterically angry and, as the crowd marches toward the gallows, shouts another intemperate but prophetic statement: "'Go on idiots, and hang an idiot! . . . Some day ye will hang your betters!'" (124).

As part of the social fable, More's charges here about the danger of a theocracy are valid, for the novel shows how the selfish ministers use the hysteria in an effort to gain control of the state and how they make the trials judicial farces through their reliance on spectral evidence and on disreputable and immature witnesses. These dangers of the theocracy are further stressed by the narrator's remarks that the church is also the courthouse and that "Those who trembled there on the Sabbath under the sermons of fanatical ministers trembled there again on weekdays under the sentences of fanatical judges" (212). In this scene, then, More's statements contribute to the ideas presented in the social fable while his manners show that even the best of men can be altered by social pressures.

This is also true of the scene in which George Burroughs is executed. To stifle any sympathy for Burroughs, who seems to the crowd to be a holy man, the "austere and unpitying" (176) Mather declares, "'Certain it is that Satan himself is often transformed in appearance into an angel of light'" (177). This statement and Mather's manner again make More frenzied and he shouts out, "'Cotton Mather, . . . it is thou who art that very Satan'" (177). Mather's ambition does make him nearly satanic in the fable, but More's remark is a further sign of the deteriorating manners which deprive More of the forbearance normally accorded him because of his high station. The insulted Mather is, therefore, able to open More's trial with "a prayer which sounded very much like a brief, powerful charge to the jury, if not like a direct plea for the prosecution" (214). Here Mather's manner not only suggests the negative effect of More's intemperate manners but simultaneously demonstrates the very dangers of the theocracy which More had announced in his role as a spokesman in the social fable. Through his indication of manners, then, De Forest makes More and Mather not only representatives of opposing social forces but individuals whose personalities lead them into conflict.

More's tragedy in both the fable and the study of manners is also closely linked with his treatment of the officials of the community, especially Elder Parris. More loathes the ignorant and gluttonous elder whom he regards as chiefly responsible for the hysteria. At various times More compares his chief opponent in the fable to Satan (77), Judas (118), and Titus Oates (183). More vigorously tries to demonstrate the inconsistencies in Parris's version of the hysteria and to combat Parris's power within the community. As is the case in those episodes with Mather, however, More's manner produces results directly opposite to those he desires. Firmly convinced that the afflicted have been bullied and beaten by Parris into making false accusations, he himself bullies and beats Sarah Carrier to make her tell the truth. When warned by Justice Hawthorne about his ways, More gives a "contemptuous laugh" (149). This beating and his attitude of contempt unite the masses in their denunciations of him as a Sadduccee. Because he is "too much of a gentleman" (163) to be summarily imprisoned for his breach of the peace as is his fellow scourger, Giles Cory, More is bound over to keep the peace. At this point he further angers the town officials when he "laughed at an insinuation of stocks and pillories, and walked off with a haughty bearing which made Justice Curwin gnash in his sleeves" (163). More disregards all such warnings, and this again brings him into direct confrontation with Parris who denounces the whipping as "the sin of . . . trying to choke the truth by violence" (164). When More later discovers children in the act of staging a manifestation, he not only whips them but commits a more serious act in giving Parris a crack across the legs.

Such violent physical assaults, together with his public verbal assaults on Parris, make More a "New England Don Quixote" (180). Motivated by noble ideals, he misjudges the true strength and character of his enemy. Parris is something of a windmill which can turn only when blown by hatred and public indignation. Each of More's attacks on his person increases this until public and official resentment reaches gale proportions. More declares, for instance, that Parris "'is the Titus Oates of this country. He is the greatest villain unhanged'" (183). Parris is a villain, but the public is outraged by More's extreme indictment for it regards Parris as "the chief martyr and apostle of the generation" (183). In the end, it is this resentment and outrage, of which Parris is only the chief representative, which becomes More's real enemy. By failing to control his manners, he commits a tactical error for, as Elder Higginson, the mild spokesman of charity, tells him, "'such violent doings as these would make men think ill of the best cause in the world'" (183).

This is exactly what happens at More's trial. The jury is prejudiced against him because of his physical and verbal assaults on the officials of the community, because of his continual sarcasm, and because of his denunciations of Parris in court. It, as representative of the community, takes its revenge on him for his failure to make his manners conform to its idea of decorum, the very principle which he had originally represented, when it condemns him to death for practising witchcraft, the very belief which he had campaigned against.

More's destruction thus illustrates two things. In the fable it shows that demagoguery is fatal to the best elements in society and can only lead to the kind of chaos and injustice that follows More's execution. In the study of manners it shows that the best men must approach the task of directing society in a spirit of charity or they will not only harm themselves but, in doing so, harm society. More's tragic flaw, his intemperate manners, that is, is the direct cause of his execution, but this execution also enables his enemies to gain even more power over the society he had tried to save.

By making Henry More's downfall central to both the social fable and the study of manners, De Forest, as I have shown, gave the first part of Witching Times power, richness, and complexity. The second part of the fable, however, lacks all of these qualities. With More gone, De Forest had no characters who could be used as spokesmen for reason and moderation and as an intense intellectual opposition to the ministers. Unable to create this kind of dramatic tension, he placed the narrative burden on a comedy of manners and a conventional melodrama, both of which undermine the unity and integrity of the novel. The comedy of manners does this because it defeats the ability of characters to function well in the social fable. The melodrama does this not only because it seems a lapse into conventionality after such an original start, but also because its emphasis on adventure weakens its connection with the first part of the fable.

The problem with the comedy of manners can be seen in De Forest's treatment of Bowson, More's simple-minded brother-in-law. The major episode involving him is a burlesque of Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown."[15] Deranged through fear of witchcraft, Bowson forces at pistol point his servant, Teague, to accompany him on broomstick and to take part in an imaginary witch meeting. The two feast and become riotously drunk, frightening the passing Elder Parris in the process. Parris is so terrified that he sends out a group of heavily-armed villagers to capture a horde of fiends. They discover instead the drunken Bowson sitting in a tree and arrest him. Bowson is so obviously deranged, however, that he is never brought to trial.

This episode itself is not gratuitous comedy because De Forest carefully prepares for it. From the beginning he presents Bowson as a comic character, a caricature of the nouveau riche, through the depiction of his manners. Bowson is repeatedly described as "sidling," a mannerism which De Forest gives him to indicate awkwardness. This awkwardness leads him into comically inappropriate gestures such as his repeated shaking of More's hand and kissing of Rachel in the opening scene of the novel. Bowson's comic awkwardness is also used as the initial sign of a weak intellect for his manners betray an inability to respond reasonably. This weakness is stressed even more through Bowson's tendency to see diabolic manifestations in the most absurd things, such as the fits of his apoplectic cat. Bowson's arguments with More also show him to have the kind of mind which finds it easier to believe in a superstition "Sanctioned by society, sanctioned by the law, sanctioned by the church" (79-80) than to accept new, but reasonable explanations for events.

In his comedy of manners, then, De Forest uses Bowson to satirize both belief in witchcraft and the unreasoning conservatism of provincial society and in his burlesque to make the point that men can be driven insane by superstition or irrational popular beliefs.[16] This point is, however, adequately made throughout the novel and his exaggeration of it in the witch meeting scene does not enhance its effectiveness. Instead it calls into question the seriousness of the latter part of the novel because it concentrates the satire on Bowson as an eccentric. This gives him little validity as an appropriate representative of the community in the fable.[17] The only contribution this episode makes to the novel is that it establishes the point that there are limits to what even a deluded people will accept.

It is not, then, so much the burlesque style of this episode as it is this lack of significance which makes it such a glaring defect. Handled slightly differently, and placed earlier in the book, the episode might have been a tour de force of black comedy. If Bowson had been portrayed as going insane and had actually been executed because of it, prior to More's trial, the episode could have brought out the grotesqueness of popular delusions. The comedy of manners and the burlesque would have then made a valid contribution to the fable because they would show graphically the simultaneous absurdity and horror of events, something with De Forest was not able to do convincingly in Witching Times.

De Forest's exaggeration in depicting manners is even more damaging in the case of Parris than it is in the case of Bowson because Parris plays a major role in the social fable. Parris is the archetype of De Forest's later gallery of corrupt Jacksonian politicians. Thoroughly coarse in manners and morals, he is wracked by base passions such as the love of money, the desire for notoriety, and the need for revenge (226). As the villain, he is a demagogue and is compared to Titus Oates because he uses deceit to manipulate society to achieve his own ends. Although he does not believe in witchcraft, he leads the persecution of witches because his hold on his parish is tenuous and he wishes to destroy those who have opposed him in a disputed land claim. His consuming hatred also leads him to destroy those who, like Henry More, oppose him. Brutal and hypocritical, he bullies and terrifies the town to make his position secure. His function in the fable is clearly stated by Henry More. In an impassioned speech during his trial, in which he seems to speak for De Forest, More attacks Parris as "'a man of vulgar and stupid nature'" (226) and points out the social significance of the rise of such base creatures:

> 'Let it be noted that this is an age of such men; an age of false accusers, and fabricated conspiracies. Titus Oates was the founder of a new style of wickedness, which, since his day, has become our peculiar national sin, and will, some day, work out its peculiar national judgment' (227).

It seems likely that De Forest, who continually tries to draw parallels between seventeenth and nineteenth-century superstitions, intends this ominous passage as more than a critique of the Salem hysteria. Probably, he was drawing oblique attention to the demagoguery and hatreds developing in his own time as the United States began preparing for the Civil War. Because he deals with basic conflicts in which the demagogue drives society insane and has it destroy the supporters of moderation and reason, De Forest has in addition here created a fable of enduring and powerful interest to Americans of the twentieth century who, like Alfred Appel, Jr., recognize in it the essential features of such modern instances of hysteria as the

McCarthy campaign against communism.[18] The essential point, however, is that De Forest clearly means Parris to be condemned as an hypocrite, devoid of moral sensitivity, who would destroy society to achieve his own selfish goals.

Contradicting Parris's role as a monstrous force of evil in the fable is De Forest's satiric attack on him as an individual. De Forest utilizes a comic depiction of manners to expose the vulgarity of a man unworthy of high social station. Therefore, he savagely ridicules Parris's appearance, speech, and manners in order to castigate him as a grotesque.

Right from the beginning Parris is presented as a grotesquely comic character. Ignorant, yet filled with a domineering egotism, he bullies and blusters his way among the townsfolk. De Forest relies heavily in his portrait, as he would do with other characters, on the repetition of verbal idiosyncrasies as a major element of Parris's manners. In a comical Cockney accent, suggestive of both ignorance and lack of education, Parris throughout the novel booms out an absurd mixture of statements, questions, and denials. This unique manner of speaking is best presented through an example of one of its many occurences. In Parris's first introduction to Rachel, for instance, he tells her of the benefits which the church will receive if Henry More joins it:

> '. . . what a support would he be! what a pillar of brass, yea, and of much fine gold! 'Ow then would the tabernacle stand firm, and the hadversaries be covered

> with confusion as with a mantle! 'Ow then would Zion's cause prosper! Will it not prosper? I should like to see the remarkable wretch who had the himpudence to say it will not. It always does prosper, whatever may be the machinations of Beelzebub' (41).

De Forest's portrait stresses the elder's coarseness. Parris's physical grotesqueness thus is emphasized by repeated mentions of his "bloated red face" (39) which is described revoltingly in one passage as like "a malignant cancer" in the "broad glow of healthful nature" (91). This is the physical sign of a gluttony which is repeatedly revealed in increasingly savage scenes of comedy. The first indication is a simple note on a gesture which serves as an ironically revealing comment. In the initial scene with Rachel, Parris says that he desires More's presence in his church "'with the bowels of love'" (41) and immediately passes his hand over his stomach. Later, he is depicted at breakfast in his home. After severely criticizing his wife for her tardiness in preparing the meal, he says "a grace of remarkable brevity and crustiness" (94) which obviously contrasts with his notoriously lengthy sermons. Eating the meal, he is also revoltingly comic: "The perspiration stood on his forehead, the veins of his throat swelled, and he looked like a man in the first stages of choking. Not a word was spoken and the meal was down in fifteen minutes" (94).

Later episodes involving food emphasize not only Parris's gluttony but also his insensitivity and hypocrisy. When Rachel comes to beg him to intervene on behalf of her father, he bullies her with a "venomous look of conscious power" (197). He prevents her from immediately stating her case by first concerning himself with the unusual number of turnips in the pot, and then by attacking his daughter for sharing her breakfast with Charity Chubb. His manners contrast with the seriousness of the issue and reveal his own malicious triviality. His "stupendous impudence" (289) is also revealed in a marvelous and comic set piece. After viciously cross-examining Rachel, he imposes himself upon her aunt, Mrs. Bowson, and reveals himself totally insensitive to her grief by demanding that she provide him with lunch. Mrs. Bowson removes all the food in the house except for a small codfish, three turnips, and the crumbs of a johnnycake. De Forest ridicules Parris by recording his pious cant which barely covers the rage he feels at being deprived of a free meal.

De Forest's portrait is largely composed of scenes which criticize by revealing Parris's viciousness and scenes which reduce him to a buffoon. An example of the first is when Parris's daughter goes into a convulsion and he strikes about her, ostensibly to beat away the demons tormenting her, but actually to give her several strokes, as if by accident, in order to bring her under control. An example of the second occurs immediately afterwards. In this scene Parris is thrown from the showy horse he has borrowed and is kicked in the rear into a bed of thistles. In this way De Forest deflates the elder's vanity and reduces him to a mere buffoon. De Forest resorts to this kind of low comedy later in the novel by showing how the sight of Bowson's mad witch revels frightens this bully into momentarily believing in witchcraft. These scenes add little but ridicule to the portrait of Parris and thus seem to be extreme. In another instance, mentioned earlier, De Forest is able to integrate the comedy into the novel. He shows Parris to be a cowardly buffoon by having him run away from a beating which More, as though by accident, gives him. This scene prepares us for Parris's attitude later when he confronts More after his arrest. Then, safe from any retribution from the prisoner, he browbeats More and reveals not only his cowardice but his full malignity as a "mean venomous toad" (193).

The weakness in De Forest's portrayal of Parris is that the tension between his presentation in the fable and his presentation in the study of manners is not, as it is with Henry More, meaningful and enriching. Quite simply, there are two Parrises. The Parris of the novel of manners is a buffoon whose manners make him deserve all the contempt heaped upon him. The Parris of the social fable is meant to be the malicious force of demagoguery, but this Parris is largely presumptive. The narrator says that "Parris was by no means the ridiculous person behind the desk that he often was in conversation . . ." (60), but we are given no graphic proof of this. De Forest did not, as Dickens did with such characters as Stiggins or Pecksniff, create a convincing comic villain because he did not give enough attention to the more sinister aspects of Parris's nature. By continually deflating Parris through the comedy of manners, De Forest destroyed his ability to function as a man who could plausibly arouse the passions of society. The result is that Parris succeeds in the novel of manners as a vulgar hypocrite but fails utterly in the fable to be a convincing agent of evil.

Evident in both Bowson and Parris, then, is an aesthetically fatal discrepancy between the character actually created by the depiction of manners and the character required by the fable. This discrepancy results from De Forest's inability to realize his best intentions as an historian of manners. As an historian, he wants to place events in a context which stresses their tragic dignity. Thus, he provides a catalogue of names to demonstrate that even the most respectable figures of history were superstitious (127). Furthermore, he repeatedly rebukes his readers for any tendency to become smug by contrasting the dignity and seriousness of the seventeenth century with the absurdity of the nineteenth:

> Let us not quarrel with the good people. Our nineteenth century gabbles not a little about Stratford mysteries, Rochester knockings, and universal table turnings; meaningless things, certainly, in every sense, destitute of philosophy, of plot, of dramatic crisis, of tragic interest. The Salem witchcraft was comparatively a heroic affair; it was vitalized by a positive and fervent faith; it was tempestuous with the strength of human sorrow; it had unity, energy, movement, a result and a moral (48).

As a social fabulist, however, De Forest does not want to know this. He is passionately committed to his interpretation of the issues and wants it presented unambiguously and forcefully. In Witching Times the historian is too meek to resist the passionate energy of the fabulist.[19] The result is that the depiction of manners does not serve to show the Salem tragedy as "vitalized by a positive and fervent faith." Instead, the depiction of manners here, as it would become later in A Lover's Revolt, is reduced to a simple method for conveying the fabulist's attitude towards the issues. Thus, Mrs. Bowson is allowed to contradict the historian when she ends her belief in witchcraft with the realization that "the excitement had been, from the first, one pure and atrocious delusion, a tragedy as barren in result as it had been frightful in incident--without meaning, without provocation, and without benefit" (246). Furthermore, De Forest insists that the trials are "monotonous tragi-comedies" (293) and presents them in that way by criticizing the testimony of witnesses as "imbecile gibberish" (218) and "a compound of nonsense too stupid even to excite laughter" (145).

Eager to make such points, the fabulist has no patience for the niceties of history. He is too anxious to lash out at what he regards as foolish or contemptibly selfish. Therefore, he coerces the historian of manners into heaping scorn on and demolishing the opponents of reason and moderation through the creation of caricatures like Bowson and Parris. While this procedure agrees with the didactic requirements of the social fable, it does not accord with its aesthetic necessities which were determined by the portrayal of More. Witching Times required the novelist of manners to continue to give solidity to the sober world of Hawthorne's Salem. Instead, he tried to satisfy the passion of the fabulist by providing the comic exaggerations of Dicken's London. It is this failure to meet the aesthetic requirements of the social fable which makes much of the comedy of manners a significant weakness in Witching Times.

The portraits of Bowson and Parris indicate the dangers of letting the interpretation of historical issues dictate characterization. The other major weakness in Witching Times, the sentimental love plot which climaxes in Mark Stanton's daring rescue of Rachel from prison, testifies to the artistic perils of the historical melodrama's conventions. The story of Mark and Rachel weakens the novel, first of all, because it is so conventional. Although most of the accused women of Salem were old, writers had long realized that young women were more appealing subjects of romance and had long focused on their trials. In such romances as The Witches; A Tale of New England (1837), Delusion; Or, The Witch of New England (1840), and The Salem Belle; A Tale of Love and Witchcraft in 1692 (1842), beautiful young heroines are accused of the crime of witchcraft after rejecting clerical suitors.[20] De

Forest utilized this same formula by having Rachel committed to trial after rejecting Elder Noyse. As in Delusion, he saves his accused heroine by having her chosen lover free her from prison and take her to safety by ship. De Forest, however, was not adept at creating melodrama. James F. Light is certainly right in charging that "the narrative sounds like Fenimore Cooper at his worst."[21]

Not only is the action formulaic, but the hero and heroine "have almost no qualities that distinguish them from the heroes and heroines of many hundreds of standardized novels."[22] They are, as Gargano thus claims, nothing but idealizations of virtuous youth. De Forest subordinates their characterization to event and gives them no manners which can bring them to life as plausible individuals or allow them to function as notable social types. Such conventionality of episode and characterization cannot fail to disappoint because the sections focusing on More lead us to expect powerful drama and rich characterization.

The second weakness of this episode is thematic and stems from its conventionality. The action of the melodrama obviously contrasts with the episodes involving More. Unlike Henry More, Mark Stanton realizes the limits of his ability to influence the public. Instead of arguing with and antagonizing people, he takes the pragmatic course of rescuing his wife and fleeing from the community. As a fable, this obviously seems to posit withdrawal and rejection as the only rational alternative for the individual who finds his society oppressive. Although De Forest sends his lovers to civilized Virginia and not the wilderness, the fable has the same pattern and fits into the same tradition as such other explorations of the relations between the individual and the community as Cooper's The Pioneer's (1823) and Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884). Because De Forest reintroduces the lovers in a scene which nearly duplicates the opening landing scene in Witching Times, it is apparent that he was trying to indicate that Mark Stanton must take on the role of Henry More. Frank Bergmann has even declared that Mark represents the "natural aristocrat" and "will rise to be a true leader."[23] Bergmann is probably correct about De Forest's intentions, but it cannot be said honestly that De Forest realized them. Mark's flight prevents him from playing a role in ending the delusion. This, together with the fact that the plot emphasizes his conventionality as melodramatic hero, prevents him from being a sufficiently lucid embodiment of the moral and intellectual values De Forest calls for. He has absolutely no connection with the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity which De Forest points out in the final paragraph. His return to Salem, instead, seems to have been used by De Forest as a device for neatly tying up plot strands. Its dominant aspect is its sentimentality; its symbolism is embryonic.

Witching Times is, as I have shown, a failure because the dynamic interaction of the social fable and novel of manners which is evident in the portrait of More is not evident throughout the novel. De Forest himself was not satisfied with it and described it as one of "two very poor things" he had "scribbled off . . . just for practice."[24] Looked at in this light as an exercise, Witching Times is remarkable for the way in which it contains the seeds of De Forest's later achievement. Alfred Appel, Jr. notes that "a strong sense of the historical--and topical--is present throughout his fiction."[25] Here we see the ability to take a significant social context and fashion from it a social fable--an ability later evident in Miss Ravenel's Conversion and Playing the Mischief--first used with partial success. Here we see the talents as a novelist of manners--evident, for instance, in what Appel calls De Forest's "precise observations on Puritan manners and dress"[26]--which would be even more richly displayed in a novel like Kate Beaumont. The signs of the ability which gave substance and meaning to his best works make De Forest's own judgment too harsh. Readers will find greater rewards in Witching Times than in later novels like Overland, Irene the Missionary, or A Lover's Revolt. The difficulties of the apprentice are obvious in it, but Witching Times also contains the unmistakable work of the master.

Notes

[1] Benjamin T. Spencer, *The Quest for Nationality* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1957), p. 74.

[2] Royall Tyler, *The Algerine Captive* (1802; facsimile rpt. 2 vols. in 1, Gainesville, Florida: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1967), I, xii.

[3] James Fenimore Cooper, *Home As Found* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, n.d.), p. iv.

[4] "The Great American Novel," *The Nation*, 6 (9 Jan. 1868), 29.

[5] James F. Light, *John William De Forest*, Twayne's United States Authors Series, 82 (New York: Twayne, 1965), pp. 129-30.

[6] Spencer, p. 137.

[7] James W. Tuttleton, *The Novel of Manners in America* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 20, quotes from William Gilmore Simms's Preface to *The Yemassee* (1835) in which this assumption is particularly evident: "The Romance is of loftier origin than the Novel. It approximates the poem." Simms, *Views and Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction: First Series*, ed. C. Hugh Holman (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), p. 259, indicates his low opinion of the novel of domestic manners in comments about Cooper's *Precaution* (1820): "In works of this class, the imagination can have little play. The exercise of the creative faculty is almost entirely denied. The field of speculation is limited; and the analysis of minute shades of character, is all the privilege which taste and philosophy possess, for lifting the narrative above the province of mere lively dialogue, and sweet and fanciful sentiment. The ordinary events of the household, or of the snug family circle, suggest the only materials; and a large gathering of the set, at ball or dinner, affords incident of which the novelist is required to make the highest use."

[8] W. H. Gardiner, rev. of *The Spy*, *North American Review*, 15 (July 1822), 281.

[9] Alfred Appel, Jr., ed., *Witching Times*, by John William De Forest (New Haven, Conn.: College and University Press, 1967), p. 23.

[10] G. Harrison Orians, "New England Witchcraft in Fiction," *American Literature*, 2 (1930), 67.

[11] The Bloody Chasm (New York: D. Appleton, 1881), p. 42. Page numbers for subsequent quotations from this edition will be indicated in parentheses.

[12] A Lover's Revolt (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898), p. 13. Page numbers for subsequent quotations from this edition will be indicated in parentheses.

[13] Edmund Wilson, Patriotic Gore (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 679, and Chadwick Hansen, "Salem Witchcraft and De Forest's Witching Times," Essex Institute Historical Collections, 104 (Spring, 1968), 102-3, discuss Witching Times as a political fable.

[14] Witching Times, ed. Alfred Appel, Jr. (New Haven, Conn: College and University Press, 1967), p. 177. Page numbers for subsequent quotations from this edition will be indicated in parentheses.

[15] Light, p. 52.

[16] Light, p. 52, makes a similar point.

[17] James W. Gargano, "John W. De Forest: A Critical Study of His Novels," Diss. Cornell 1955, p. 37, makes a similar point.

[18] Appel, pp. 28-29.

[19] Gargano, pp. 24-25, and Hansen, pp. 102-3, note some of the discrepancies I am treating, but their analyses differ from mine.

[20] My discussion of the history and conventions of witchcraft fiction is indebted to Orians.

[21] Light, p. 53.

[22] Gargano, p. 39.

[23] Frank Bergmann, The Worthy Gentleman of Democracy (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitatsverlag, 1971), p. 36.

[24] Quoted by Edwin Oviatt, "John De Forest in New Haven," New York Times, Saturday Supplement, 17 Dec. 1898, p. 856.

[25] Appel, p. 8.

[26] Ibid., p. 27.

CHAPTER III

MINOR FICTION: THREE NOVELS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

I

In Chapter Two, I suggested that historical subjects offered De Forest two particular advantages not offered by contemporary life. First, because the clash of cultural forces was more clearly discernible in such subjects, he had at hand a narrative pattern which he could use as a social fable. Secondly, because history was, when compared to contemporary life, static, he had "something fixed to paint" which could give his fable the sense of life generated by the novel of manners. De Forest, however, did not immediately follow his initial attempt to exploit these advantages with another historical novel. Instead, beginning with his second novel, Seacliff (1859), he made repeated attempts both to portray and to criticize contemporary American society.

These attempts met with varying degrees of success. In his most successful novels of contemporary life, Miss Ravenel's Conversion (1867), Honest John Vane (1875), and Playing the Mischief (1875), he utilized significant recent events--the Civil War and the scandals of Grant's administration--to throw into relief conflicting forces, much as he had done with the historical situation in Witching Times. These major novels will receive the extensive analysis they deserve in later chapters. In this chapter I will confine my remarks to the minor novels of contemporary life, Seacliff, The Wetherel Affair (1872), and Justine's Lovers (1878), which do not employ specific topical events as the pattern for social fables. Instead, these novels contain plots and characterizations which betray De Forest's obsession with acceptance in the marketplace. In each of these novels, De Forest's attempt to satisfy what he perceived to be the demands of popular taste vitiated the portrayal and criticism of contemporary American society.

Seacliff, The Wetherel Affair, and Justine's Lovers form an interesting group for analysis because they represent different stages of De Forest's art in two ways. First, they belong, respectively, to De Forest's apprenticeship period before the war, to his period of greatest achievement, and to the period of declining power which began about 1875, after the last of his major novels, Playing the Mischief, had received book publication. More importantly, they do reveal to a great extent the tendency Jay Martin finds in De Forest's fiction, the tendency as his career progressed, to make the "basic pattern of his imagination" stand out from and dominate his novels.[1] Arranged chronologically, these novels move from the pole of novel of manners, through the central position of novel of manners combined with social fable, to the pole of social fable. They differ markedly, in other words, in the extent to which they employ the two components of De Forest's fiction with which this study as a whole is concerned.

Although they differ in formal properties, these three novels show a similar and serious thematic concern for the state of contemporary American manners and morals. Central to each is some kind of investigation of the concept of the gentleman, a concept which Frank Bergmann has pointed to as important in De Forest's value system.[2] Edwin Harrison Cady, in The Gentleman in America (1949), describes this traditional concept as a "constellation of six main ideas:" "There are the shaping, background factors of birth and wealth. There are the three inward attributes of being which mark the essential gentleman: character, courtesy, and cultivation. Sixth, there is the idea of the function of the gentleman in society."[3]

The first two ideas of this constellation are evident in De Forest's fiction because his heroes and heroines typically come from respectable families and from at least the professional classes. De Forest apparently found it necessary to include an admixture of wealth in his portraits because, as Cady notes, "Without wealth there is neither leisure nor opportunity to cultivate the mind or arts of living and expression."[3] Wealth alone, however, is never used in De Forest's fiction as a primary symbol of personal worth or an infallible sign of the gentleman. The inward attributes in Cady's constellation loom large in De Forest's fiction because the term "gentleman" is not a designation of social station, but an expression of an ethical and social ideal. Thus, in Seacliff, for example, the wealthy Van Leers, who have all the outward trappings of gentlemen but seem to lack the inward attributes of character, courtesy, and cultivation, are initially described as "underbred people, whose parvenudity [sic] could not be hidden by any cunning of tailors and mantua-makers."[5] Finally, Cady's sixth idea, that the gentleman's function is to contribute to the government or welfare of society, is evident in the praise which is accorded Edward Wetherel, in The Wetherel Affair, and Justine Vane, in Justine's Lovers, for their decisions to devote themselves to philanthropic endeavours.

In each of his novels of contemporary life, then, De Forest is concerned with depicting social surfaces, but his thrust is through outward displays to the underlying realities of ethics, feeling, and intellect which he regards as the primary indices of individual worth. This thrust shows a serious concern for the moral basis of social relationships. It is particularly evident in Seacliff, The Wetherel Affair, and Justine's Lovers because each is a story of increasing awareness or the growth of moral perception. In each novel, that is, dramatic events lead at least one character to a recognition of the primary value of inward qualities.

Although these novels do display such signs of a serious attempt to examine American manners and morals, the novels are vitiated in each case by implausible and hackneyed "marketplace" elements. In Seacliff they prevent the organization of what is in parts a penetrating study of manners into a cohesive social fable. In The Wetherel Affair they weaken both the novel of manners and the social fable. They weaken the first because they limit the credibility of major characters, thus preventing the study of manners from giving significant life to the social fable. Similarly, they weaken the fable itself because they prevent it too from being taken seriously. Finally, they completely destroy Justine's Lovers because that novel, as a social fable, is made to depend upon an embarrassingly hackneyed and sentimental plot. The need to make his central characters follow the formula demanded by this plot seems to have prevented De Forest (or, possibly, discouraged him) from animating them with anything like a perceptive portrayal of manners.

In the analyses which follow, then, I will examine the distinctive features of each novel as a serious criticism of contemporary American society and identify the ways in which the elements of "marketplace" fiction make each work fail as a social fable or a novel of manners. In this way I hope to substantiate further my central contention that De Forest was a successful literary artist only when he was able to combine a good social fable with a complementary study of manners.

II

Although *Seacliff* would have to be classified as a mystery story on the basis of its plot alone, its tone, its setting, and, especially, its theme make it more fundamentally an American version of the British novel of manners. As such, it offers a penetrating, nearly profound study of American manners and morals. A mystery plot inadequate as a means for organizing the portrayal of manners and for focusing the novel's theme into a social fable, however, prevents it from being more than an interesting and, sometimes, entertaining minor novel.

The tonal similarity between *Seacliff* and British novels of society and fashion was first noted by an astute reviewer for the New York *Times*. He wrote that *Seacliff* "is of the *Vivian Grey* and *Pelham* school, and is as full of new world persiflage and flippancy as those novels are of the froth and foam of English social life."[6] Characteristic of this kind of banter which enlivens many pages of *Seacliff* is Louis Fitz Hugh's ironic praise of Boston manners:

> 'For my part, I like the Tremont type. It is on the whole the best moral and intellectual man this side of the Atlantic. Let me tell you an anecdote. A friend of mine, a doctor, was walking the pavement of his city close behind a stranger who seemed to have just arrived. The stranger coughed and cleared his throat.

> Every time that he did so, he stepped to the edge of the sidewalk and spit in the gutter. Most Americans would have expectorated over the pavement, trusting to the next lady's dress to sweep it up. "That man is a Bostonian," said my friend to himself' (297-98).

It is interesting to note that De Forest may have been indebted to Disraeli and Bulwer-Lytton for more than the light tone of his novel. In _Vivian Grey_ (1826-27), Disraeli includes political intrigue and a duel, and, in _Pelham_ (1828), Bulwer-Lytton traces Henry Pelham's attempts to prove that Sir Reginald Glanville is innocent of the murder of John Tirell. De Forest's use of similar devices within the mystery plot of Seacliff may, then, owe something to a desire to duplicate the popular success of these novels.

In its choice of setting, _Seacliff_ also resembles many British works. The bulk of the novel is set in the Connecticut country house of the Westervelts, an American approximation of the country estates prominent in many British novels. Like the British novelists, De Forest devotes much of the work to examining the daily round of life in this house. Indeed, Edward Wagenknecht finds that "_Seacliff_ represents about as close an approach to the British country-house novel as can be made in America,"[7] a fact De Forest was probably conscious of because he wrote to his publisher that he was sorry he had not, as he once intended, called the book _The Country House_.[8] It should be noted, however, that De Forest does not offer a simple transcription of a British setting. His house is a miscellany of incompatible elements which give it a "snobbish individuality" (8). This crudely pretentious dwelling is thus, as Light observes, "suggestive of the gaucherie of upper-class American tastes and manners."[9]

The most important similarity between Seacliff and British novels of manners, however, is in the way they both use the social life they describe. In "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," Lionel Trilling says that "The characteristic work of the novel is to record the illusion that snobbery generates and to try to penetrate to the truth which, as the novel assumes, lies hidden beneath all false appearances."[10] Seacliff does precisely this "characteristic work" in the portraits of Louis Fitz Hugh, Somerville, Mrs. Van Leer, and, to a lesser extent, some of the minor characters like the elderly Westervelt. For this reason, it is, as I have already contended, a novel of manners which conducts a serious investigation of American conduct and values.

This serious investigation depends on Louis Fitz Hugh's social and moral education. Because it is a first-person narrative, all events and characters in Seacliff are presented as he perceives them. He himself is a neophyte writer of romances and his initial analysis of events and characters betrays romantic preconceptions. Thus, when he accidentally overhears a melodramatic threat uttered behind a door, his imagination leads him into a series of comically naive and improbable conjectures. Such things as Mrs. Van Leer's evident coquetry or Genevieve Westervelt's resemblance to a portrait of Beatrice Cenci, for example, lead him to link them with the mysterious threat. On the whole, his aesthetic estimate of the affair as poor melodrama causes him to make hasty conclusions based on appearances or romantic conjecture and reveals him to be initially a self-confessed "ignoramus of life" (20).

He does, however, gradually come to appreciate that he is not in an "opera comique" but in a "tragic theater in which some grave mystery or woful [sic] drama was evolving" (91). This appreciation is, in turn, accompanied by a profounder understanding of character. He gradually learns to abandon superficial estimates and thus comes to a more genuine moral understanding of the people he observes. In essence, it is his growing understanding of Somerville, Mrs. Van Leer, and Frederick William Hunter that constitutes the heart of Seacliff as a penetrating analysis, of the gentlemanly configuration in manners and morals.

Somerville, the central figure in this analysis of manners and morals, is a man whose social poise and mastery of decorum deeply impress Fitz High. Although Somerville "had seen dissipation enough to waste the ruddiest health," he is imposing to Fitz Hugh because, at thirty-seven, he is "as erect, as fresh, as unwrinkled, as graceful in port as if Father Time had but just brought him to the first full perfection of manhood" (20). In addition, Fitz Hugh recognizes in him a man whose manners allow him both to enter inconspicuously the elegant circles of Europe and to orchestrate the less impressive social life at Seacliff. Fitz Hugh, for example, pays tribute to Somerville's social mastery by noting that he is the "social bully of Seacliff, driving the men with the same ease that he seemed to wheedle the women, and managing both with so much tact, wit, and grace, that it was difficult for them to detect his tyranny" (58).

Fitz Hugh's initial estimate of Somerville is based on his own aesthetic satisfaction with Somerville's deportment which he enthusiastically describes as consisting "entirely of lines of beauty, undeformed by a single straight mark or angle" (23). Because of this beauty of manner, Fitz Hugh lauds him as an American manifestation of the Old World gentleman: "Somerville was the most wonderful incarnation of blandness, grace, and social flexibility that I had ever met, reminding perpetually of those famous carpet-knights, _sans peur et sans reproche_, the Chesterfields and Richelieus of old" (61). For this aesthetic reason alone, Fitz High considers it stupid and unjust to entertain any suspicions that Somerville is the man who had uttered the mysterious threat.

A fortuitous accident, however, suggests to Fitz Hugh that Somerville's sophisticated manners might indeed be only a veneer covering a corrupt moral nature. Fitz Hugh once again detects voices in the drawing room where he had first heard them. Then he sees Somerville, who does not notice him, hastily emerge from a back room with some jewelry. With this unexpected clue to the mystery, Fitz Hugh determines to observe Somerville closely, even to the point of following him to New York, in order "to learn his character and his possibilities for evil" (115).

Fitz Hugh's new concern for Somerville's moral character leads him to an awareness that Somerville is, in fact, something of a snob whose manners are largely mannerisms. Prior to his discovery of Somerville with the jewelry, Fitz Hugh had not made much of this snobbery other than to note that Somerville habitually complimented in a manner that subtly enhanced his own image or used such rhetorical skill in telling of Fitz Hugh's rescue of Mary that he appeared to better advantage than the tale's hero. After his discovery, Fitz Hugh's comments on such displays are more pointed. On one occasion, for instance, he recognizes the rather amusing snobbery of the egotist. Somerville is revealed as an intellectual sham when, after he has delivered a forceful discourse on manners, Fitz Hugh informs the reader that the essence of the speech had appeared earlier in a newspaper article. Much of Somerville's engaging wit is thereby exposed as a social trick and an exercise in vanity: "His conversation was infused with all the literary ideas of the day; his dinner-table efforts smacked of poems, novels, histories, dailies, monthlies, quarterlies, encyclopaedias; and yet he constantly admitted and lamented that he was no reader, thereby gaining vast reputation among unbooked people, for originality and fecundity of thought" (320). More important than this, however, is Fitz Hugh's discovery that Somerville is also a moral hypocrite. This occurs when he learns that, on the day following Somerville's eloquent discourse on the evils of scandal, Somerville actually gave a reporter an item of "fashionable scandal" (129) concerning the Westervelts.

At the heart of Fitz High's discovery is the recognition that gentlemanly manners are not invariably based on gentlemanly morals. Fitz Hugh seems quite incredulous that this should be the case. He is so amazed that he calls Somerville a "miracle" because he has a dual nature: "'It is impossible to get two men into one skin; to unite the soul of a finished rascal with the bearing of a finished gentleman; but it seems to me that he has done it'" (316).

A significant weakness in the novel is noticeable here. Its root is in De Forest's inability to manage well a first-person narrative. De Forest has here employed a narrator of limited capacity who must present something beyond his comprehension. Thus Fitz Hugh avoids giving penetrating analysis by relying to excess on the creaking machinery of myth. The basis of this, and it is natural enough for a writer, is literary. It is Dante's story of Branca Doria which is recited at the beginning and the end of the novel. Like Branca Doria, Fitz High indicates, Somerville has the body of a man, but it is inhabited by a devil. Repeated references emphasize the point: in thought or in conversation Fitz High calls Somerville "'an evil genius in human shape'" (210), "a demon whose face bore the likeness of Somerville" (161), and a "human fiend" (400). On one occasion Fitz High even calls Somerville "the human vampire, the man who feeds upon women, who fascinates only to pillage them . . ." (124). Fitz High's explanation of Somerville, in fact, is almost completely in terms suggested by myth. Thus, he excuses Somerville's virtuous father from any blame in his son's moral collapse by suggesting that Somerville's nature was the same as that of the proud angels who followed Lucifer: "He was one of those intelligent misdoers who choose the broad road with a full consciousness of its evil; one of those splendid sinners who shine and dazzle like fallen seraphs as they move through the blackness of darkness . . ." (445).

If Fitz Hugh's mythic explanation existed alone, it would only be a disappointing way of explaining a character who in conception is fascinating and, possibly, original in American literature. But De Forest seems to share his narrator's limitations. He gives heavy-handed support to the mythic explanation by providing Somerville with symbolic fangs instead of teeth and a laugh that reminds Fitz Hugh of "snakes, alligators, and such like slimy, dangerous creatures" (116). The cumulative effect of Fitz High's mythic descriptions, of the animal imagery which clusters around Somerville, and of De Forest's physical descriptions is to rob the portrait of much of its plausibility. Such insistent devices simplify Somerville as a type. They ignore the substantial analysis of the psychological traits and social conditions which might have produced such a complex individual. Some such analysis, however, is essential if a portrait is to be penetrating in any profound way.

Although the psychological hues are absent from his portrait, Somerville does, nevertheless, effectively fulfill a complex function in the analysis of manners. In spite of his moral nature, Somerville's social accomplishments are presented as indicative of a sophisticated civilization. He is still something of a social model because his influence on some of those around him seems to prove, as he declares, that "'A gentleman in manners, . . . no matter how vicious, is a civilizer'" (319). Fitz Hugh, who had earlier admitted that it is possible to learn something of goodness even from Lucifer (247), is in basic agreement: "Great is urbanity, great is decorum, and almost worthy of being classed among the moralities" (320). Manners, however, are not themselves good morals, even though "'this fine varnish,--this enamel of character,'" as Mary Westervelt says, "'sometimes does the work of a virtue'" (316). Fitz High now realizes this.

While he continues to appreciate the aesthetic value of manners, he also sees that they must exist with the inward or moral qualities of the gentlemanly configuration. Fitz Hugh, then, understands that if Somerville had been "moved by a noble ambition" (324), his influence might have been wide and great. But Somerville, like Aaron Burr whom he praises as a formative influence, is not, as Fitz High now knows, a true gentleman.

It is here that Seacliff approaches profundity in its penetration of manners. Fitz High indicates that he is no longer dazzled by the beauty of manners because he has acquired the knowledge that fine manners may be a false surface. Thus, he presents Somerville as a cautionary figure who indicates that the beauty of the true gentleman must not be limited to the surface: "Frank's history but shows that money, an attractive person, and fascinating manners, without unflinching moral principle, form only an inheritance of temptation" (444). The significance of Fitz High's discovery, however, extends beyond the fact that it indicates that he himself has developed from a man who could praise manners for their aesthetic qualities of harmony and beauty to one who has a deep concern for their moral basis. Fitz Hugh is here implying that fine manners can, in fact, mask evil intentions. As a mask such manners are dangerous because they prevent the detection of faulty morals. This, in turn, makes a false gentleman, like Somerville, dangerous to both himself and others. That is, because he can go about corrupt ways undetected, he may be tempted to satisfy base desires, as Somerville did, and destroy his potential to do good. For the same reason, he may snare others, as Somerville did with Mrs. Westervelt, into corruption. Somerville's actions, then, forcefully indicate that fine manners, without the control of morals, can be a potent force for evil. Somerville's failure to exert such control makes him the real tragic figure in the mystery of the Westervelts: instead of becoming the incarnation of the ideal gentleman, he becomes a villain, thus wasting his exceptional good qualities.

In the case of Somerville, De Forest shows that manners can be dangerous when they conceal a base motive, but he also indicates that sophisticated manners by themselves do have a limited beneficial influence. Thus, he suggests that Somerville's gentlemanly deportment did much to improve the tone of social intercourse at Seacliff. In the case of Mrs. Van Leer and her brother, Hunter, De Forest indicates other dangers of manners and establishes that one must not only be good, but must also present the appearance of being good.

While Somerville appears to be a "carpet knight," Mrs. Van Leer seems a "she knight-errant in search of amorous adventures" (464). She is an ostentatious and modish flirt. Her speech is audacious and affected ("'It is my du--ty to sit still and think about my absent hus--band; but it is my pleas--ure to prome--nade with you'" [196]). Her manners, unlike Somerville's are constantly at the very edge of decency. Thus, she habitually enters a room with a "flirt and flutter of ostentatiously displayed embroidery" and displays a "passion for low dresses, which she gratified on every occasion sanctioned by fashion, and to the most dizzying verge of propriety" (374). What is more, she indulges a whim for flirtations with any available male, even in the presence of her husband. Her manners thus mark her not only as one who lacks the refinement of the true lady, but as one who does not possess the true lady's moral standards.

Her manners, however, are as much a false surface as Somerville's. Her coquetry is purely a sham meant to advertise her participation in the gaiety and frivolity of fashionable life. Fitz High learns this on two occasions when he shocks her, first with a deliberate bluntness of conversation her manners invite, and then with an acceptance of one of her invitations to flirt. On the second occasion, Fitz Hugh becomes angry when Mrs. Van Leer, upon reaching an isolated spot during their walk together, suddenly drops her flirtatious pose and shows, instead, "nun-like modesty" (264). Feeling that this is an imputation that his own morals bear watching, he mocks her by feigning a strong interest in her. Mrs. Van Leer's prudish alarm reveals to him that she is far from being as immoral as her manners suggest. In fact, she possesses a definite, although unusual and shallow sense of propriety: "'If people want to flirt, they should do it at a party or ball. That is the proper place for it, sir'" (266).

De Forest penetrates Mrs. Van Leer's facade in another way, thus exposing her as an hypocrite. At various times, she argues that women are the equals of men, a sure sign in De Forest's work that she is meant to seem intellectually ridiculous and will be exposed in very broad satire. A hint that she is not as strong as she pretends is provided by an episode describing a boating party during which the weather becomes rough. Evident here is her habitual manner of clinging to her husband in the face of danger. Another indication of this cowardly nature is the flirtation episode I have already mentioned, especially since it concludes with her boasting and taunting Fitz Hugh for his cowardice once she is certain that she is out of danger. The major exposure, however, occurs when her husband accuses her of flirting with Somerville. Instead of claiming two flirtations for every one he charges her with, as she had boasted she would, she crumbles in the face of his now forceful manner and weepingly denies everything.

Mrs. Van Leer, then, displays the social defects of the nouveaux riches because her failure to adopt an acceptable set of manners is a failure to adjust properly to the demands of her role in society. But she also illustrates the moral dangers that attend this failure. As

Fitz Hugh realizes, her moral nature is not strong. Typically, he sees her in terms of Dante's "feeble spirits . . . who were neither good nor evil" (266). He also realizes that her conduct does pose a threat because it is "detrimental to the purity of her manners, if not of her soul" (192). Her false manners, that is, may be a snare for herself and others. The flirtation scene is only the most obvious indication of this, for Mrs. Van Leer is fortunate that she has not trifled with someone lacking Fitz Hugh's scruples. She, in fact, does not end up tragically like Somerville. Instead, her husband saves her when he finally does his own duty and asserts his authority. With her marriage on what Fitz Hugh regards as a more rational and mature footing, Mrs. Van Leer then properly reforms her manners to make them more accurately express her conventional morality.

Mrs. Van Leer's brother is not as fortunate. A vividly and dramatically presented comic eccentric, Hunter is similar to his sister in his lack of maturity, his affectations, and his cultivation of "man-about-town" manners. He possesses, for instance, an idiosyncratic, foppish, skipping walk which is characteristic of his flighty nature. He also has a characteristic habit of telling patently absurd lies about his prowess at drinking, smoking, and flirting. He appears ridiculous not only because of the very nature of these lies, but also because he habitually contradicts himself since he cannot later remember their details. Finally, Hunter is extraordinarily insensitive to criticism because he has "a vanity so dense that it is proof against all wit, and can be shattered only by downright billingsgate or a fisticuff" (58).

Although De Forest creates some fine comedy which reveals that Hunter is not a sophisticated and worldly man but a sham, he does not use Hunter entirely as a comic character. He shows that Hunter's eccentric worship of his own whims has a sinister dimension when Hunter's lying generates scandals about Lottie Capers and the Westervelt sisters. Hunter, however, is the chief victim of his own shams. He praises Somerville extravagantly and confesses that he has learned more of life from him than from his teachers. Fitz Hugh realizes that Hunter has chosen to emulate the worst traits of his model, a sign that Hunter is "afflicted with moral blockheadism" (314). Although Hunter begins as an unconscious caricature of a worldly man, he becomes the creature of his sham manners and ends up truly dissipated. In this way he serves to reinforce the lesson which both Somerville's and Mrs. Van Leer's portraits reveal: that there is a moral danger in manners which do not emanate directly from a high moral sense.

The revelations of the shams which Somerville, Mrs. Van Leer, and Hunter practise constitute the heart of the analysis of the gentlemanly configuration in Seacliff. Fitz Hugh's social education is not, however, confined to his acquisition of knowledge about their characters. Fitz

Hugh also discovers the existence of an obsessive materialism which is detrimental to American cultural and moral refinement. The desire for wealth, in fact, is at the root of the mystery which he stumbles into at Seacliff. Thus, Somerville required money to satisfy his passion for dissipation. Earlier he had convinced Mrs. Westervelt to falsify a will, a crime she agreed to because she was vain and too preoccupied with the desire to achieve the highest status which wealth can confer to resist temptation. Disinherited by his father and not inclined to honest work, Somerville then resorted to blackmailing her. In some ways, she is also the victim of her "business-bitten" (103) husband. He is an inept speculator with no interests outside of making money. He fails to protect her because he neglects his family while he makes frequent speculative journies to New York. He, in turn, is seen as the victim of his own father's neglect. The elder Westervelt is a type of the complete businessman and money dominates his life. He treats his son with complete contempt because his son does not possess his own financial acumen.

In all, Fitz High's discovery of American upper-class life constitutes an interesting critical analysis of an age of "social brass" (9) ineluctably developing into the Gilded Age. It points to the need for Americans to cultivate manners based on sound moral principles and to place humane feelings above materialistic concerns. In spite of this serious anlaysis, however, Seacliff does not succeed as fiction.

The major reason Seacliff fails is that De Forest ineptly manipulated a plot he had hoped would grip a popular audience. James Gargano, who has evaluated Seacliff as a mystery story, says that it fails because there is no real detection since much of the solution to the mystery comes by accident; because it depends on trite and shopworn action devices; because it lacks an atmosphere of suspense; and because it lacks tension.[11] Light has added another failure to the list. He notes that "the solution to much of the mystery is clear early in the novel."[12] I am in full agreement with these charges. I think that the plot of Seacliff is so patently feeble that it would add nothing of substance to my argument to rehearse or elaborate Gargano's and Light's charges. Nevertheless, since out of all the critics who have written on the novel, one has gone against the general trend and tried to defend this plot, the case for its failure may be made even stronger by briefly noting an objection to his case.

Philip H. Ford insists that Seacliff is "intentionally a parody of the Jane Eyre type of romance."[13] He contends that the "essentially hackneyed"[14] plot is a device employed to parody and, thus, criticise popular literature: "Much like Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey, which burlesqued the Gothic romances of her fellow novelists, Mrs. Radcliffe et al., De Forest's Seacliff shows his scorn of the complicated plots, the mystery, and the general histrionics common to the fiction of his time."[15]

There is a grain of truth here for there is something of a parodic undercurrent in Seacliff. Ford becomes extreme, however, when he claims that "it succeeds as a penetrating and enjoyable parody of the romantic novel."[15] Ford himself, in fact, is forced to admit that "Seacliff is not purely a parody" and that De Forest's "trifling" with romantic conventions gets "out of control."[17] Actually, De Forest's parody is incidental rather than sustained. De Forest does not use his thread-bare episodes to point out the disparity between reality and the expectations generated by conventional and Gothic literature as Jane Austen did. Instead, De Forest relies on them to further the serious intentions of his plot. In spite of Fitz Hugh's rather comical misperception of the nature of the mystery at Seacliff, for example, he is not the victim of an over-heated imagination as Catherine is in Northanger Abbey. The evil that Fitz Hugh suspects at Seacliff is genuine. Somerville, in fact, is as villainous as Fitz Hugh imagines when he begins composing his own cliché-choked romance. The fact that there is no major difference between the implausible action Fitz High writes about and the action of the novel proper is taken as a clue to parodic intentions by Ford.[18] Even if this were so, it does not mean that the parody is successful. The reverse is true, I think, because, while both stories end with the blood of a "sufficing vengeance" (271), only that in Fitz Hugh's novel is openly mocked. Mrs. Westervelt's murder of Somerville and her subsequent suicide is equally as improbable and pat, but it is presented as the climax of a genuine moral tragedy. Because it mirrors an absurdity, however, it does seem absurd. But because this absurdity is used as the denouement of a study of genuine evil, it is an artistic weakness. Seacliff fails as a parody, then, because it contains too many elements which blunt the parodic purpose. Seacliff also fails as a mystery because too many seemingly parodic elements are put to serious use. In the end, Seacliff hardly seems better than the very works Ford would have us believe that De Forest was attacking.

In addition to the fact that it does not provide satisfactions we expect from a mystery and cannot even be regarded seriously, the plot fails because it dominates some of the characterization. Somerville, who is well-presented throughout most of the novel, is finally a plot victim and is turned into an absolute monster. He is made implausibly villainous, for example, when he behaves out of character and tries to compromise Mary by entering her bedroom. On the other hand, the Westervelt family is composed of pallid creations who, throughout the novel, seem to exist more because of the exigencies of plot than because they may be objects of fruitful observation. Because she is the key to the mystery, this is especially disastrous in the case of Mrs. Westervelt. Gargano suggests that De Forest may have deliberately kept her in the background in order to keep the reader unaware that she is Somerville's victim.[19] I think that this is true and that it points out how the demands of the mystery genre run counter to those of the novel of manners. The mystery demands suspense which it gains through the suppression of vital facts and through the use of "red-herrings." The novel of manners, however, requires complete delineation and full exposure of character to be successful. By suppressing information about her in order to make her satisfy the demands of the mystery, De Forest weakened a portrait which could have given additional power to his exploration of manners and morals. Mrs. Westervelt, that is, is only a shadow, but she could have been a graphic example of the moral dangers of snobbery.

Mary Westervelt is another character who exists only as a device. She is only a day-dream creature, a stereotypical heroine whose physical beauty is complemented by moral beauty and grace of manner. These attributes are, however, only presumptive because she is so sketchily presented that she is never successfully juxtaposed with Mrs. Van Leer or Somerville in any way that dramatizes the difference between manners as the true expression of soul and manners as a sham surface. She only exists, first, as a red-herring suspect in the mystery and, secondly, as a principal in the love story. But this love story, as

Gargano says, "illustrates nothing."[20] It only indicates that--especially after a man has saved a woman--young, handsome, cultured, financially independent youngsters are inevitably attracted to each other, at best a banal proposition in an analysis of manners and morals.

Finally, this failure to give the love story significance is symptomatic of De Forest's failure to create a plot which would give the novel an adequate structure. Too many characters and episodes contribute little or nothing to the study of manners and morals. Little Willie, the Westervelt's son who tells lurid "'tories," is the most glaring example. The vague resemblance these stories have to the affairs at Seacliff may have been intended to indicate the extent to which the family's joy has been blighted and to foreshadow tragedy. No explanation of Willie's seeming insight is, however, ever proffered. He seems to be dragged on stage as an afterthought to suggest, rather unsuccessfully, a Gothic atmosphere. Willie could have been made an innocent victim of his mother's folly, but De Forest simply forgets him once he has told his stories. Lottie and Mr. Capers are other characters who contribute little. Lottie's reconciliation with her father, for example, seems a gratuitious piece of satire aimed at sentimentality. Even episodes which suggest the nature of life at Seacliff are not always utilized well. For the detail devoted to them, the *tableaux vivantes* do not provide much insight into the characters. De Forest did not make them, as Jane Austen did in Mansfield Park, reveal anything about social propriety or the moral attitudes of the participants. Similarly, the middle-class Treats and the lower-class Warners are interesting representatives of their social levels, but they are not brought into significant dramatic opposition with the other classes and thus fail to illustrate the essence of class differences in manners and morals.

Seacliff, then, contains an interesting, serious, and nearly profound analysis of manners and morals in its studies of Somerville, Mrs. Van Leer, and Hunter. The novel ultimately fails, however, because it is too diffuse. Seacliff required organization as a social fable if it were to illustrate successfully an important idea about the gentlemanly configuration. In its present form there is, as Light says, an "ineffectual focusing of theme."[21] De Forest's mystery plot is simply inadequate as a formal device. It does not provide any adequate way of weaving into the novel the analysis of a broad spectrum of manners and morals. Such analysis does exist in Seacliff, but it is independent of the mystery and thus weakens what should be central in a mystery, the relentless drive to unravel clues. Furthermore, the mystery degenerates into a stock melodrama, the episodes of which seem designed more to test the reader's level of credulity than to illustrate any significant idea. De Forest himself does not seem to regard this feature of Seacliff very seriously and I think that his flippant attitude towards it indicates that he regarded the mystery as simply a way of luring the public into an exhibition of American society. That exhibition does have some merit, but the disaster created by the "marketplace" plot proves that De Forest the artist should have learned that he could not trust the judgment of De Forest the huckster.

III

The Wetherel Affair, De Forest's sixth novel, is an ambitious attempt to conduct a comprehensive examination of American society. It is also a complex work because, in a single novel, De Forest portrayed manners as marks of individual character, as marks of social station, as marks of national character, and as indices of social change. In addition, the novel is complex in design because it is, as James Gargano was the first to realize, "an elaborate social fable."[22]

In spite of its complexity, The Wetherel Affair is a disappointing novel. Something of a recreation of Seacliff, it reveals De Forest again trying to satisfy popular taste by combining mystery and sentimentality as a spice for his serious investigation of manners and morals. This recipe again fails for, as Light says, "the faults of Seacliff are intensified."[23]

The most glaring of these faults are its weakness as narrative and its overwrought sentimentality. The plot, in particular, dominates to such an extent that the major characters in the study of manners seem to exist more as devices than as objects of fruitful observation. Furthermore, this plot is so hackneyed and obvious that it robs the social fable of dramatic interest and leaves it nothing but a contrivance. The result is a lifeless novel of manners and a mechanical social fable which fail to reinforce each other except in their mediocrity. This failure of The Wetherel Affair demonstrates that De Forest did not succeed simply by including a study of manners and a social fable in a novel. He had to make both elements good in themselves. Only then could they complement each other and make a literary work successful.

Although it is a failure, The Wetherel Affair is worth examining, not only because it shows how day-dreaming about sales receipts destroyed De Forest's artistic concentration, but also because its scope and complexity do give it some interest and even some merit as a piece of social criticism. In the following analysis, then, I will examine De Forest's use of the novel of manners and the social fable as a means for criticising American society. I will show that in each case the attempt to appeal to a wide audience prevents the theme, the need for a new American gentleman, from achieving a credible and dramatic fictional presentation.

What literary merit The Wetherel Affair does possess is largely concentrated in the novel of manners. This contains a greater variety of character types than is found in Seacliff and the variety is completely functional. In his Hogarthian way, De Forest juxtaposes on a crowded canvas full-length portraits of the aristocratic, the lowly, the saintly, the corrupt, the idealistic, the eccentric, the foolish, and the wise. This juxtaposition of portraits serves two functions. First, it dramatizes the decline of American society from the ideals and standards of the old-style gentleman. Secondly, it offers a remedy for this decline in its presentation of a new version of the American gentleman, a man who combines the moral standards of the past with a more humane set of manners. Both of these functions can be demonstrated by examining, in turn, the characters who embody versions of the gentlemanly ideal and the characters who represent social decline. It should be emphasized, however, that since Edward Wetherel, the central character, undergoes a change from profligate to gentleman, and since juxtaposition plays an important part in the evaluation of both groups of characters, the examination cannot be divided absolutely into two distinct phases.

Although he is murdered in the first third of the novel, Edward's uncle, Jabez Wetherel, provides the foundation for the analysis of the gentlemanly ideal. De Forest invests him with manners which indicate social station, the values of the past, and individuality. This display is successfully combined to create a portrait of the gentleman which is rich in both humanity and social significance. For this reason, it is the best portrait in the novel.

The fact that Judge Wetherel is wealthy and has little to do with his rustic neighbours indicates his station as a "social patrician."[24] This status is not important in itself and is not dwelt on. What is important is that Wetherel takes pride in his descent from "Puritans of good social position and of high breeding" (19). Wetherel, then, is shown to possess the background factors of birth and wealth which are essential elements in Cady's description of the gentlemanly configuration.

Pride in ancestry is related to an even more important characteristic of Judge Wetherel's manners. Repeatedly he displays the formality and "the solemn courtesy of a gentleman of the old school," a dignified manner which makes him a "patriarchal figure" (24). His manners, thus, are those of the past. The particular past he represents is that of his ancestors for he is, as the flighty Alice Dinneford phrases it, "'an old Plymouth Rock of a man'" (14). He is, that is, the Christian gentleman of the old school.

The Judge himself believes in the principle that "'A Christian . . . ought to be the most perfect gentleman on earth'" (19). De Forest, however, shows that the Judge's idea of gentlemanly behaviour is founded entirely upon the stern, sombre, narrowly dogmatic puritanism of of his ancestors. He does this by portraying such characteristic behaviour as the Judge's enforcement of morning prayers, his placing of religious tracts in all the bedrooms of his house, his opposition to tobacco, and his constant references to the Bible and religion in conversation. More importantly, he displays this commitment to a rigid puritan code as a form of moral tyranny in the Judge's dealings with his nephew, Edward, a representative of a morally flabbier age. Displeased with the conduct of "that unclean bird of prey, his reprobate nephew" (28), the Judge reveals most dramatically that his commitment has made him a "dictatorial soul by nature" (19). He demands that Edward conform completely to his own puritan manner of life. When Edward refuses to behave hypocritically, the Judge states that his own behaviour is governed completely by a "'sense of duty'" and that "'That motive I must obey, whatever my natural desires may be, whatever my earthly affections may urge'" (52). For this reason, he disinherits Edward.

De Forest judges Jabez Wetherel as the representative of an earlier period from two points of view. Quite clearly he approves of the Judge's commitment to duty. It contrasts with the behaviour of both Nestoria Bernard and Walter Lehming, whose battles with their consciences play a prominent part in the novel. Nestoria runs away when she thinks she sees Edward murder the Judge and Lehming helps her avoid detection even after he discovers her identity. Both characters condemn their own actions as failures to place duty above personal feelings,[25] judgments De Forest supports when he calls Nestoria's act "her one evil deed" (219).

Nevertheless, De Forest makes it clear at two points that as much as the Judge is to be admired as an "incarnate case of conscience" (69), his inflexibility and domineering manner cannot be approved of totally. Each instance is evidence of a pragmatic criterion for judgment because each takes into account the adverse results generated by the Judge's manners.

In the first instance, after reporting Edward's statement that the Judge "'makes religion disagreeable'" (35), De Forest notes "the regrettable fact that the exterior of Judge Wetherel's noble probity and sincere piety had some severe features which repelled instead of enticing, and that, had he been less exacting and inflexible in the minor matters of his moral law, he might more easily have led souls into his own circle of beliefs and sentiments" (35). The saintly exponent of a rational and humanistic religion, Walter Lehming, later makes an even severer judgment when warning Edward about reforming himself too violently:

> 'All extremes of conduct verge on irrationality. The extremist does evil as well as good. Calvin purified the church, but his preachings were too violent, and there has been a harmful reaction against them. Your well-meaning and pure-hearted uncle was in his way a Calvin. He did you little good while he lived' (157).

These indictments suggest, then, that part of the reason for the decline of respect for traditional values lay in the coldness and unnecessary rigidity with which they were associated. Furthermore, they suggest that the gentleman who upholds necessary values must make his manners more appealing if he is to be influential in saving the democratic experiment from corruption and vulgarity.

The severity of manner which characterizes Wetherel as an old-fashioned puritan gentleman should make him seem completely forbidding, but De Forest skillfully moderates the portrait with the depiction of manners which make Wetherel seem basically kind as an individual. Thus, De Forest stresses Wetherel's habitual kindness to Nestoria as a sign of a gentle soul. Furthermore, De Forest endows Wetherel with enough idiosyncrasies to make him a slightly comic eccentric. His habit of skipping meat from a carving fork onto a plate, his leisurely method of driving his carriage, his insistence that late-sleepers be aroused by the admonition, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise" (20), his refusal to substitute his brass bell for a silver one to summon the household to morning prayers, and his habit of chasing little boys who swear (with the result that they always swear around him) mark him as an unique individual. The mild satire of such touches does not negate the Judge's dignity. Instead, it allows us to see and to appreciate the fallible human beneath the Cromwellian mask.

Because the Judge is the representative of the fading, rigorous, puritan past, comparison of his high-minded behaviour with that of most of the other characters provides an index of the degree to which society has strayed from lofty ideals. Alice Dinneford, who visits the Judge at Sea Lodge, is, for instance, seen as a typical "representative of New York Society" (32):

> Like many another 'sweet girl' of our times, she had grown up in the belief that life ought to be one everlasting picnic, at least for young ladies. She felt herself wronged, and believed that she had a right to be angry, when she was not amused from morning to night. Self-denial she had none, nor any ennobling longing after labor and duty, but only a desire to 'have a good time' (167).

Lacking the Judge's commitment to values and standards, she devotes herself to pursuing the fashionable life and to indulging in flirtations. Her triviality nearly leads her into a disastrous marriage with Count Poloski whom she wants only because he is a favourite of other girls in stylish society.

It is Edward Wetherel, however, who is most deliberately contrasted with the Judge. As he is presented initially, his manners make him a modern type, the socialite, the "New York dandy and man-about-town" (7). Like Alice he leads an idle life and lacks significant aims. Unlike his frugal uncle, he is extravagant and ostentatious. His lack of firm principles is indicated by the fact that "There had been wild orgies in his life in Paris and painful scandals in his life in New York . . ."

(37). Edward does not consider himself a bad person because he judges himself as simply a normal young man. The religious values of his uncle and of Nestoria play no role in his conduct since "church membership was to him a simple decorum, a matter of etiquette and deportment and breeding, which some people thought urgent and others not" (62). Although he is not a Christian gentleman like the Judge, this idle aristocrat is saved from becoming completely degraded because he does have some of the qualities of the secular gentleman, "innate kindliness and that species of moral culture which is called a sense of honor" (44). The latter, indeed, seems to owe much to another aspect of the gentlemanly configuration which he shares with his uncle, pride in breeding or ancestry.

Following the murder of the Judge, Edward is presented in a new light as "'the resurrection of his Puritan ancestors'" (88). His friend Lehming points out that the change is occasioned by the shock of the murder which has caused him to feel deeply and to think about his life. Although love contributes to this reformation,[26] it is Lehming's "ethnological explanation" (88) which is stressed throughout because other characters repeatedly notice signs of the Judge in his behaviour. Also, when he interferes to prevent the marriage of Poloski to Alice, he reveals this breeding as "a Wetherel of the ancient, remorseless, Cromwellian type" (179). His stern moral sense and his new sense of duty--he determines to practise medicine and to aid the lower classes--thus symbolize a rejection of the ostentation and corruption of contemporary society and a return to the values of the Christian gentleman of the old school.

The portrait of Edward is not, however, entirely successful in either of its phases.[27] It is far too generalized and conventional to make Edward much more than a rather typical sentimental hero. In the first part of the novel De Forest indicates Edward's dandyism by sketching his attire and by showing his social mentor, the aging and idle Wolverton. He leaves open to question, however, the extent of Edward's immorality. It is only the Judge, the narrator, and Edward himself who offer any severe judgments on his conduct. Lehming, who throughout is the voice of reason and points out the excessive sternness of the Judge, does not support these harsh assessments. His interpretation of Edward's earlier life, that Edward committed "the ordinary excesses of youth" (138), is, in fact, precisely the same as the view Edward held before his transformation.[28] Edward's earlier statement, however, is obviously intended to suggest his insensitivity to moral values. Such vagueness and even confusion about Edward probably arises from the need to make him acceptable as a lover to a sentimental audience. By implying that Edward is immature rather than depraved, in other words, De Forest could involve him with Nestoria without in the least damaging his audience's respect for her as a pure and noble-minded virgin. This need, however, is opposed to the demands of the novel of manners. By meeting it De Forest does not permit Edward to fulfill adequately his function in the first part of the novel of manners. This part of the novel requires some dramatic presentation of Edward's earlier life or some more graphic depiction of his manners in order to establish Edward as a man open to moral dangers because he has abandoned the code that governed his ancestors.[29]

In the second part of the novel the stress on Edward's moral rebirth, which makes him an acceptable lover and hero, similarly undermines one of the essential purposes of the comparison of manners. The Judge had been presented as something of an extremist who, although motivated by noble impulses, had not been an effective moral force. Supposedly Edward has learned from his example to curb any sternness of manner: "Wetherel and Lehming were young men of the modern Puritan type, resolute and tenacious enough at heart, but outwardly composed and mild" (163). But this remains presumptive. De Forest fails to depict him in any way that adequately dramatizes this combination of mild manners and stern morality. Instead, Edward plays the role of hero and appears throughout as not so much a new American gentleman as "the historical Wetherel" (138). Because De Forest does not endow him with anything like a richly specific set of manners, then, Edward is not sufficiently realized to seem in any way more than a conventional hero or a type from a morality play.

It is not the wooden and righteous Edward but the ugly and dwarfish Walter Lehming who actually provides the most effective contrast between the old-fashioned and the modern gentleman. Like Judge Wetherel, Lehming is an "incarnation of conscience and intelligence" (83). He is, however, much more flexible because the outward forms of dogma are not as important to him. He can, for example, see that the church's opposition to the theatre is misguided. Lehming is also a man open to new ideas and can, thus, reconcile Darwinian theory and religion. Most importantly, Lehming's manners, unlike the Judge's are consistently inviting. He is, then, habitually courteous and kind, traits amply demonstrated by the benevolent way he caters to Nestoria's needs and by his gentle efforts to improve Imogen Jones's mental culture. Lehming's kindness, indeed, is so great that it leads to his one moral lapse, his concealment of Nestoria. Like the Judge, he believes that social and moral duties must take precedence over personal feelings. When faced with such a choice, however, he does not, like the Judge, act swiftly and sternly to carry out the dictates of conscience. Instead, he lets emotional considerations lead him from the path of duty. Thus, although he considers it an immoral act, he helps Nestoria escape imminent capture by Detective Sweet.

Lehming himself unequivocably condemns this action when he tells Nestoria,

> 'My hiding of you was wrong. My not insisting with you for an immediate divulgence of the truth was wrong. It was of a piece with the general lack of proper feeling in America toward crime. I have done what unfaithful policemen and jurymen and judges and governors do. I have sought, with a false and unwise and sinful pity, to shield sin from punishment' (216).

In spite of the obvious hyperbole here, it is clear from his identification of himself with a fallen society that he realizes that he has not behaved in this case like a true gentleman. The point, thus, seems to be that the new gentleman must not allow an admirable mildness to vitiate a necessary sternness. Lehming, however, is obviously propelled in his course of action by plot demands. He cannot let Nestoria be captured because her testimony would lead to Edward's imprisonment. Edward would then not be able to function as the hero. This simple plot necessity leads to a deflection of the thrust of the study of manners and morals. As Gargano has shown, Lehming's supposedly evil action actually promotes justice because it leads to the discovery that Poloski is the real murderer. The novel thus fails to show that there is any potential evil in it at all.[30] The ultimate consequence is that Lehming's action does not really symbolize what he claims, for it does not demonstrate the evils that accompany a failure to perform the true gentleman's duty. Therefore, it definitely weakens the novel's analysis of the gentleman.

The portrait of Lehming is also weak in itself because it is daubed with sentimentality. Lehming is portrayed as a martyr to his physical deformities. Every day he contemplates his ugliness before a mirror and then resigns himself to God's will. When he begins to fall in love with Nestoria the exercise fills him with revulsion: "'I must live for others. . . . No one but a dog would ever live for me'" (149). His customary humility, gentleness, benevolence, and unselfishness thus take on the added dimension of responses to overriding feelings of inferiority. De Forest, however, does not pursue this point. He emphasizes the virtues themselves rather than their possible source in a morbid psychology. Thus, Lehming is described in terms of a saint when he goes forth to prove Edward's innocence with full knowledge that success will mean that he can never win Nestoria. De Forest says that on this occasion "he sacrificed himself, as he was accustomed to do" (210) despite the fact that there has been not the slightest indication that Nestoria would argue with Lehming's own estimate of his chances. De Forest further sentimentalizes the scene by calling it a "dolorous and sublime hour of renunciation" and aggrandizes the dwarf as one "near to that divine ideal of love which renders all and requires nothing" (210). As with so many of the scenes involving Lehming, the sentimentality is more emphatic than the insight. The result is, as Light observes, that Lehming is "memorable as a conception" because of his complexity, but in execution is "too lacking in shading, too bathetically pointed as a man of sorrows, and too much what a sentimental audience wished, to be more than an especially interesting puppet."[31]

In spite of all the faults in his portrait, Lehming still functions as a democratic nobleman, "one of nature's grandees" (133). On stage for large portions of the novel and in contact with all the other characters, he is the critical centre of the analysis of manners and morals. Especially in his opposition to extremes of conduct, his insistence that "'The Divine Reason is perfectly reasonable'" (138), and his declarations about the necessity of duty and useful activity, he articulates the primary gentlemanly norms by which characters in the fallen world are judged. The most important judgments about this world can be discerned through an analysis of three characters, John Bowlder, Imogen Eleonore Jones, and Count Poloski.

Both Bowlder and Imogen are satirized as eccentrics, people who display affected and inappropriate sets of manners and thereby reveal a lack of necessary common sense. Bowlder is a caricature of a disciple of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman. He speaks with a rhetorical extravagance which parodies Emerson's aphoristic writings and he holds "whimwhams" which betray his foolishness and impracticality:

> . . . the ideological Bowlder prided himself on treating the every-day, essential affairs of his life with sovereign contempt, eschewing discourse concerning the people whom he knew and the things which he did, and talking mainly of matters that he was not acquainted with (128).

Bowlder's "other-world countenance, manners, and dialect" (127), then, constitute one of the extremes of conduct which Lehming has condemned. They are not only foolish, however, they are a sham. His manners, like his clothing, are enormous coverings over an insubstantial man. This point is made when Bowlder, trying to learn what it feels like to earn a dollar by honest manual labour, is arrested as a suspicious person. Forced to strip, he peels off numerous layers of garments until all that remains of the formerly massive man is a "skeleton of the original Bowlder" (196). The frightened Bowlder's characteristic manner is similarly transfigured: "Even his conversation, stripped and divested as it was of transcendentalism, was lean and shrunken" (197).

The episode's satire, of course, is directed at more than eccentric manners because these manners are only the outward expression of transcendental philosophy. This philosophy itself is presented as absurd because it is evident that it does not enable Bowlder to cope with experience in the real world. But Bowlder himself does not learn this. He puts on his old manner and its philosophy with his clothes. He is not, like Edward, reformed by experience. In fact, he determines that he will not become a productive member of society like Edward, but will live idly on his inheritance and bask in the artificial sunshine of his soul. Bowlder's useless, ostentatious manners, therefore, signify that he is no true gentleman because they prohibit him from fulfilling a gentleman's function in society.

Imogen Eleonore Jones is equally as foolish and nearly as single-minded as Bowlder. Her obsession is not philosophy but the weekly journals of romantic and sensationalistic fiction which she reads in order to escape the tedium of a mundane life. Through this sketch of a "constant reader" of two such weekly papers, the "Spasmodic" and the "Turtle Dove," De Forest satirizes both such journals as Robert Bonner's phenomenally successful New York Ledger and the uncultivated public which reads them.

Devoid of refined taste, Imogen considers her reading fare to be great literature, or, as she puts it, "'the chefdoeevers of fiction'" (101). This belief distorts her view of reality and makes her extremely affected. Walter Lehming correctly judges her to be "'an untaught, uncultured soul, and rather a barren one'" (129), but Imogen believes that she has actually acquired "eminence of feeling and intellect" (110) and this prevents her from learning what a real gentleman like Lehming can teach her.

Because "her soul . . . was intent upon her own aggrandizement in the eyes of her fellow creatures" (114), she supports this conceited assessment of her own worth with the exaggerations of deportment and affectations of speech which she has gleaned from her reading. On their first day together, for instance, Imogen's gesture upon leaving Nestoria is a wave of the hand "which she had caught from a sensational woodcut" (102). When she returns she makes "an impressive tableau of herself, such as one heroine should present in addressing another" (105). Her speech is just as grandiose and just as derivative as her deportment. In her first conversation with Nestoria, "She mouthed her words like an actress in a fourth-rate theater" (98). Deliberately, she cultivates an artificial form of speech, an "inhuman grand piano manner" (112), which she considers refined. Actually, it is excrutiatingly absurd because it is a parody of the "purple prose" of sentimental romances. An excellent example of this affected rhetoric is her speech welcoming visitors to her tenement apartment: "'In the inane wilderness of brick and mortar which billows and throbs around us there are many, many abodes far more palatial than this, but none, surely none, in which you would be received with a simpler, more earnest, more heartfelt cordiality'" (112).

Although Imogen apes the version of aristocratic manners presented in her fiction, she is a lower-class girl who betrays her lack of genuine cultivation on several occasions. In her first meeting with Nestoria, for example, she speaks "with a prompt tartness, which slight as it was, militated against her claims to high breeding" (98). Imogen also indicates her lack of breeding as a lady when she becomes jealous of the attention Lehming gives Nestoria and utters a sarcastic remark, "putting into her tone more of the mustard of satire than was absolutely necessary to give a taste to her words, as people of light brains and incomplete cultivation are apt to do when spiteful" (156).

Howells declared that Imogen was "quite inexcusably caricatured"[32] and both Gargano and Light have followed his lead by describing her as an "extreme" caricature.[33] They have, then, implied that her portrait is artistically defective.[34] To a certain extent, matters of taste are definitely at question here. Such criticism, however, tends to neglect the fact that De Forest was not attempting to create a rounded and realistic character. M. L. Ross has pointed out that "Exaggerations of deportment are . . . a major method of the satirist, who would expose inappropriate deportment for our condemnation."[35] De Forest is working within the tradition of novelists of manners who have thus used the eccentric as a device for social criticism. Imogen, like Bowlder, Mrs. Dinneford, Poloski, and even the Judge, is a character who fittingly inhabits the world of social comedy. She demonstrates the absurdity of affectations and typifies a public wallowing in sentimentality. Sometimes the "mustard of satire" is spread too thickly, but Imogen is, as Ford recognizes, "a genuinely amusing character."[36] Furthermore, she is not without shading. Imogen does display some common sense and some kindness in her relationship with Nestoria and De Forest notes that she can be "as simple and practical in some moments as she was stilted and sentimental in others" (102). De Forest also indicates on several occasions that Imogen's affectations are the result not only of an imperfect education, but also of a paucity of genuine emotional experiences. For this reason, I think Frank Bergmann assesses the portrait accurately when he says, "The novel sufficiently bears out De Forest's statement that she is, 'in spite of her relish for ghoulish literature, . . . really a human being.'"[37]

Imogen does possess life because her manners are minutely depicted. Unfortunately, they are too minutely depicted for her to be comfortable within the larger melodramatic pattern of _The Wetherel Affair_. There is, first, for her function in it, a disproportionate amount of attention devoted to her. Secondly, and as a result of this, her comic vivacity is so overpowering that it knocks over the melodramatic main characters, revealing them to be thin cardboard. Without question, Imogen is much more alive and is definitely more memorable than, for example, Nestoria Bernard. The chief fault with Imogen and with Bowlder also, then, is not that they are caricatures, but that they expose a melodrama too anemic to support them without collapsing in exhaustion.

The portraits of Bowlder and Imogen are only the most notable of those which De Forest employs to paint an age too sentimental and weak to maintain the gentlemanly ideals Lehming articulates. This social criticism is broadened through the dramatic opposition of European and American manners with the introduction of Poloski, a spurious Polish count.

Poloski is a gambler, a dandy, and an heiress-hunter. More graceful than the Americans he encounters, he still seems slightly foolish because his continental manners are too elaborate for the simple society in which he moves. Poloski's conceit also makes him ridiculous because it leads him to continual boasting about an improbable number of scholarly achievements. Nevertheless, Poloski does genuinely have more facets to his character than the Americans he encounters. Challenged by Wolverton as to how he can mix dandyism and intellectual pursuits, he replies with a stinging criticism of America:

> 'Why should not a _flâneur_ be also a great man? . . . Caesar was a dandy. You Americans are not many-sided enough. It is not that you have not brains individually. It is the defect of your intellectual atmosphere. There is in it no variety of culture. It is not so in Europe' (65).

De Forest uses Poloski not only to suggest the differences between European and American culture and manners, but also to illustrate his belief that the foreign immigrants who flooded American shores following the European revolution of 1848 had the potential of sweeping away traditional American values. Lehming points out this danger:

> 'Not because a stranger is not an American do I mistrust him, . . . but because he is not at home; because he is surrounded by no public opinion to which he feels responsible; because he is too free from restraint for the good of human nature. We mortals are just so weak that we need all the social bonds to keep us from being wicked' (132).

Lehming's fears are given dramatic substance when Poloski murders that representative of traditional American values, Jabez Wetherel.

Poloski's unscrupulous attempt to marry Alice Dinneford for her money also illustrates this point. In addition, it provides De Forest with the opportunity of exposing American attitudes towards Europeans. Alice's infatuation with Poloski reveals one defect in the American character. This is a lingering awe for the concept of nobility: "We are good republicans in our heads; we can argue against caste in the abstract, and do not want its hands in our pockets; but our imaginations are enchanted by it" (159). In agreeing to marry him she shows that she has abandoned democratic principles because she has "fairly departed out of her Yankee senses" (171). De Forest views the romance as an indication of a latent dissatisfaction with the defects of the democratic experiment:

> Poor little feminine republican! She did not really admire the man; she more or less thought him a jackanapes, and perhaps a bad fellow; but her democratic soul was entangled and laid helpless in the meshes of a title. How many daughters of freedom, not to dilate upon a 'smart sprinkling' of fathers and mothers to the same, have gone and done likewise! One wonders whether the time will ever come when our countrymen will be able to say with unshakeable pride, feeling that there

> is no loftier boast on earth, 'I am an American citizen!' Probably not while our politics remain in their present demagogical chaos. If bosses continue to rule our cities, and old war-horses to neigh brutish stupidities in our Congress, it will be well if the entire nation does not follow the example of Alice Dinneford, prostrating itself before some Poloski and saying, 'Rule thou over us' (169-70).

In this case, De Forest shows, as Frank Bergmann says, that "The solution to the problem is the natural American aristocrat, the worthy gentleman of democracy."[38] Edward Wetherel prevents the unfortunate marriage by exposing Poloski as a swindler who had charged all his wedding gifts to Mrs. Dinneford. This revelation of the contempt Poloski has for them merely because they are bourgeois shocks the Dinneford ladies into returning to their "Yankee senses." They now recognize that in accepting the idea of caste, they admit the inferiority of Americans. This, of course, they do not. The episode thus shows that true nobility is a matter of character, as with Edward, and not title, as with Poloski, and that it rightfully belongs to Americans who cultivate democratic virtues. Because he possesses the virtues and is dedicated to the education and betterment of the labouring classes, Edward demonstrates the strength of the American national character. Thus, Edward holds out the hope that the gentleman can save democracy by following reason and the path of duty.

The Wetherel Affair, then, does display a broad range of manners to present a serious theme, but, as I have indicated in parts of the above analysis, it fails as a novel of manners because of its weakness as narrative and its excessive sentiment. The plot here, in fact, is even more ineptly handled than in Seacliff. De Forest employs the tired formula of the physical double to generate its mystery, but only the most obtuse of readers would fail to recognize that the murderer of Jabez Wetherel is not his nephew, Edward, but the foppish Count Poloski. De Forest tips his hand prior to the murder in a very awkward and obvious way. Before introducing Poloski, he has Edward instruct a waiter to summon him by explaining, "'Looks a little like me; perhaps a good deal'" (38). As if this were not a sufficient clue, Wetherel continues: "'I don't brag of it. . . . But I have been taken for him, and I know he can wear my clothes'" (38).

Because the murderer is known from the beginning, most of the remaining action stands out as an embarrassing, melodramatic contrivance. One could, I suppose, give an iota of credence to Nestoria Bernard's mistake in thinking she has witnessed Edward committing a murder because she has never seen Poloski clearly. Her perilous flight in a small boat, her near drowning when it capsizes during a storm, her fortunate rescue by a passing boat, and her subsequent adventures while she hides in New York require an almost impossible suspension of disbelief. These episodes are not only incredible, they are basically purposeless. They do not advance the theme at all. Furthermore, they are usually overwritten and cloyingly sentimental.

Most difficult of all to accept in this mélange of stock improbabilities and sentimental excesses is the fact that neither Edward, who first mentions his own similarity to Poloski, nor any of the characters who know them both ever consider the possibility that all evidence points to Poloski. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that everyone knows that at the time of his murder Jabez Wetherel had been working on a will which would have disinherited Edward because of his profligacy, the characters who would benefit from the will insist that Edward is legal heir and must retain the Wetherel fortune.[39] To develop Edward's status as a worthy lover De Forest has others show him such respect even though doing so undermines the credibility of the characters and weakens the theme of his study of manners.

The narrative failure of The Wetherel Affair, then, is a serious flaw because the major characters, especially Edward and Nestoria, become victims of the plot. The action is meant to illustrate a serious social and moral idea, the need for Americans to perform their duties as citizens in spite of personal feelings.[40] The major characters, however, merely perform the mechanical actions the plot dictates and never gain credibility as individuals trying to resolve complex emotional and moral problems. Nestoria, for example, is central to this illustration, but she is an especially feeble character. All of her poorly-motivated running and hiding merely prolongs the solution to the crime, just as her accidental recognition of Poloski hastens the solution. In addition, Nestoria's dilemma as a rootless orphan facing a difficult battle between conscience and feeling is neither emotionally interesting nor convincing. De Forest tries to stimulate compassion for her with phrases as banal as "a friendless waif on the great, pitiless ocean of life" (193).[41] The cloying sentimentality and triteness of expression, which is characteristic of major portions of The Wetherel Affair,[42] belie the fact that much of De Forest's current reputation is based on his presentation of an unsentimental view of life in a distinguished prose style.

Because this plot, weak as it is, is designed to illustrate a particular idea of society, it is a social fable. De Forest employs his characters as representatives of cultural and moral forces and traces their actions to illustrate his idea through what Gargano calls "an elaborate and even ingenious parable."[43] The following description of this parable relies heavily on Gargano's excellent account of it.

De Forest's depiction of Jabez Wetherel makes the Judge a representative of the stern morals and stiff manners of ante-bellum America.[44] His death symbolizes the "violent death of the old order."[45] His murderer, Poloski, enacts dramatically the effect his fellow immigrants have on American values when they support the

"Ring."[46] The old society is thus replaced by one characterized by corruption and inefficiency (the political rings and detectives like Sweet), the absence of taste and cultivation (Imogen Eleonore Jones), and the idleness and neglect of duty inherent in a purely "social" life (Edward Wetherel and Alice Dinneford). Edward's character transformation marks a return to the values of the past which are needed to save American society from collapsing into crime and chaos.[47] By moderating his uncle's sternness of manner, he makes these values more attractive and, thus, more potent for good. The actions of Lehming and Nestoria, on the other hand, illustrate that this relaxation cannot extend to the application of the values themselves. Their concealments show what Lehming calls "'the general lack of proper feeling in America toward crime'" (216) which contributes to social chaos. Bowlder illustrates a similar thing for, as Gargano says, "The transcendentalist's optimism fails to take cognizance of the evil that is threatening to destroy America."[48] Finally, the marriage of Edward and Nestoria symbolizes the union of "religious and social zeal"[49] which will work to save America.

Although it is elaborate, this fable does not succeed. Gargano notes that the narrative which conveys a social fable must itself sustain interest, but that The Wetherel Affair "has little dramatic power and urgency."[50] The popular plot and its attendant sentimentality not only prevent The Wetherel Affair from having these qualities but, in addition, blunt the force of the illustration because, as I noted in my discussion of Lehming, they do not always permit adequate realization of a character's function. Thus, the function that Lehming and Nestoria are to play in the fable is clear from Lehming's own statements but is not as clear from their actions. Because the very actions which they condemn actually prevent Edward from being unjustly imprisoned, these actions run counter to the idea they are supposed to illustrate in the fable. The result is some confusion of purpose in the fable and the comments of Lehming and the narrator which seek to give it direction only make the fable more obviously a mechanical contrivance.

At the root of De Forest's failure in The Wetherel Affair, then, is his attempt as a professional writer to make the novel earn him something more tangible than critical praise. The desire to be popular and to earn money is not necessarily destructive of art, but De Forest was unable to satisfy the demands of art and the demands of the marketplace simultaneously. In The Wetherel Affair, therefore, he permitted the artistic elements to become obeisant to the popular ones. For this reason the major characters in the novel of manners are more types from conventional literature than social types. Edward Wetherel and Nestoria Bernard, in particular, seem to be little more than typical sentimental lovers. In the social fable the action of the mystery plot does not in every case illustrate De Forest's ideas although it is essential to his critique that it should. Thus, the novel of manners fails to make the social fable anything more lively than a mechanism and the social fable fails to give completely significant form to the novel of manners. In the final analysis, the plot and the sentimentality make it impossible to take the novel seriously, even though the social fable does have the form of an elaborate parable and the study of manners does extend from an analysis of those which are marks of individuality to those which are marks of national character. Because of this, the real significance of The Wetherel Affair may well rest in the lesson it teaches students of literature: that complexity, whether of design or aims, provides no index of achievement in a novel.

IV

Like The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885), Justine's Lovers (1878) is a fable of social decline and moral elevation. Justine Vane, the narrator, begins as a rich and idle socialite who, after the loss of her fortune, learns that moral feelings are more important than displays of social station. She reemerges from the economic nether world, but she retains this lesson. Although the events which affect her are far less dramatic than those which change Edward Wetherel, she is similarly transformed into a person with a moral fervour which demands that she reach out and aid humanity. She illustrates, then, that what is essential to the true lady is not social station but social function.

This theme does have potential. The popular plot on which Justine's Lovers depends, however, makes it such a poor novel that, again, one zealous student of De Forest's novels has tried to reclaim it as a parody. De Forest confessed to W. M. Griswold that Justine's Lovers "was an attempt to imitate the ordinary 'woman's novel.' Not a critic in the U.S. questioned the sex of the writer; I looked over the reviews sent to Harpers in order to see if this would be so." Citing this remark as his primary evidence, Philip Ford claims that Justine's Lovers must not be evaluated as a "serious work," but as an "intentional parody of the 'woman's novel.'"[51] Ford's proof consists of noting that "The excessive quality of everything in the book--the mawkish sentimentality, the shallow stoicism, and the platitudinous religiosity--parodies the substance of the 'woman's novel.'"[52] The difficulty with generously assuming that De Forest's imitation functions as parody is that the novel contains a serious theme which is not dependent on any possible parodic intentions for its realization. The series of implausible events which leads to Justine's heightened moral awareness trivializes the novel because it makes ridiculous the very action which conveys the idea of a serious moral and social education.

Ford's attempt is understandable when we consider

De Forest's plot. Only a person with well-anesthetized sensibilities could suppress a chortle at even a bare outline of it.

Justine Vane, a wealthy lady, becomes engaged to rich Henry Starkenburgh. Shortly afterwards, she suddenly loses her fortune. Starkenburgh's father, who promises to give her financial aid, dies unexpectedly before he can carry out his plan. Henry abandons her. Nearly destitute, Justine goes to Washington to seek employment. There she meets the wealthy but sickly M'Ilvaine Waln. They become engaged. Snobbishly high-minded, Justine refuses to accept any money from him until after their marriage. Again she is left penniless when he, too, unexpectedly dies while on a trip to California. Suddenly, Henry Starkenburgh appears to renew his proposal. Fate fortuitously intervenes now to prevent Justine from accepting him. First, her friend Bartle happens to interrupt her interview with Henry and informs her, in an aside, that Waln's recently-discovered will bequeathes her a fortune. Secondly, instead of going back to her conversation with Henry, she rushes to tell her mother of this stroke of luck. Her mother just happens to know that Henry would be in a position to know of the will's existence. Armed with this knowledge, Justine confronts Henry and righteously rejects his suit. She then determines to devote herself to philanthropic pursuits.

A ridiculous plot, however, does not make a novel a parody. Certainly, De Forest must have enjoyed thwarting the expectations of sentimental readers by having the title, Justine's Lovers, refer to those people who aided Justine and not to the men who sought her hand in marriage. But there is no internal evidence which suggests that De Forest was deliberately satirizing popular fiction. This is, as he said, an imitation of the "woman's novel" and he tried to make it serve a serious end. The fact that Ford wishes to treat it as a parody testifies to De Forest's failure to transmute the mental opiate of the sentimentalists into something more stimulating.

Justine's Lovers, therefore, does not merit much consideration. A brief analysis of its major faults can, however, add further support to my contention that De Forest's attempt to make a novel popular vitiated serious social criticism.

There are two major flaws in Justine's Lovers. First, the characters are only pallid outlines. They perform necessary functions to advance the plot and they indicate, in positive and negative form, the idea that compassion and not social station is the necessary attribute of the true lady or gentleman. But they never seem more than concepts. The plot grinds on relentlessly to its conclusion. The action which illustrates the idea of the social fable is emphasized to such a degree that there is only the feeblest effort to depict manners.

The second flaw is that the social fable itself becomes a victim of the plot. Through a story of Justine's moral growth, De Forest tries to illustrate the belief that the practical exercise of the virtue of charity creates meaningful bonds between people, gives life its worth, and provides a measure of genuine happiness. To some extent, almost every episode marks a stage in the development of Justine's awareness of this idea. The implausible reversals in the plot, however, do not make the lesson very convincing. The thematic weakness of the social fable, as well as the poverty of the novel as a whole, can be demonstrated by a brief analysis of the effects of the popular plot on two characters, Waln and Justine, who are essential to the ideas _Justine's Lovers_ seeks to illustrate.

Waln, the sickly millionaire, is described as being handsome, "with a slightly melancholic expression, but very sympathetic and gracious in manner, very well-read also, and decidedly clever."[53] He is evidently intended to be a compassionate aristocrat who contrasts with the callous Henry Starkenburgh since he is willing to marry Justine in spite of her poverty. Waln, however, never really comes alive because his important traits are not vividly dramatized. Furthermore, he is not very convincing as a philanthropist even though Justine eulogizes him as one of her "lovers." His major act of kindness, for example, does not take place until after his death when it is discovered that he has bequeathed money to Justine and Bartle and has made Leming his executor. His failure to give Justine financial aid earlier is understandable because she continually displays a wrong-headed pride and refuses to ask for anything. What remains unexplained is why, if he is so charitable, he made no attempts to aid his other poor friends, Bartle and Leming, before his death. This issue is particularly unsettling because the novel strongly implies that Leming is in love with Justine and deliberately gives her up to Waln because Waln has more money. The result of the lack of character analysis and vivid depiction of manners is that Waln remains a philanthropist in concept only. He is thus a plot device, a deus ex machina, and not a character.

Waln's act of showering gold upon all the worthy characters does provide a conventional happy ending, but it weakens the power of the fable. It highlights charity as an economic act, rather than as a spiritual attitude. The lessons Justine learns about the beauty of love for mankind and the consoling power of useful labour become little more than empty platitudes. By making Justine a lady in social station as well as in inward qualities, De Forest evades the issue of whether Justine's spiritual growth could have brought her happiness and whether she could have brought happiness to others if she could not give them wealth. As Gargano, who raises these issues, says, "In evading these questions, De Forest refuses to grapple with some of the thorny problems aroused by his social philosophy. The book, therefore, seems to lack depth and tough-mindedness."[54]

Further evidence of thematic shallowness is the failure to analyse either the social or moral implications of Justine's willingness to marry for money. Justine avoids Leming and desires Waln simply for financial reasons. She admits, for example, that "I was not madly in love with this very lovable man" (111), yet she becomes engaged to Waln. The evasion of the issue is particularly blatant because Justine immediately defends herself against charges that she might be dishonourable because she has accepted a second man after having once pledged herself to Henry Starkenburgh. This apology directed at "Romantic people" and "sentimentalists" (113) fails to note her obvious material motives. Although Justine's later admiration for Waln's goodness and her desperation mitigates her callousness, she seems strikingly similar to Henry Starkenburgh who also treats marriage as a social and financial arrangement. Even though Justine may be viewed as sacrificing herself for her mother's benefit, her act lacks heroism and nobility because De Forest fails to show convincingly her alternatives. There is much talk of extreme poverty and illness in Justine's Lovers, but the Vanes experience what seems like a rather genteel poverty because they are well cared for by their friends. Justine does little at first to end their dependence except to apply for a position for which she is clearly unsuited. Her poverty after she starts the kindergarten continues primarily because the payments are due at the end of term and Justine is too proud to borrow from her friends. By failing to present Justine's alternatives adequately and by failing to probe the psychology of a woman who is too proud to borrow and yet eager to marrry for money, De Forest weakens the novel as a piece of economic criticism and as a study of spiritual growth. The lack of a sentimental and sexual impulse in her decision to marry Waln is, no doubt, meant to show greater maturity because it contrasts so obviously with the way she first responded to Henry. Because she almost becomes engaged to Henry again, however, it is only her pragmatism which is emphasized.

A plot full of sentimental surprises, then, prevents _Justine's Lovers_ from succeeding as a social fable because the action does not really convince us of the idea it is meant to illustrate. At the same time, the characters are stilted because the only approach to a depiction of manners is a limited presentation of the Starkenburghs near the beginning of the novel. The result is hollow and trite fiction. Perhaps the best and kindest assessment possible is Arthur Hobson Quinn's pithy comment that _Justine's Lovers_ has "a few good moments, but they are few."[55]

The three novels I have examined in this chapter, _Seacliff_, _The Wetherel Affair_, and _Justine's Lovers_, contain at least some evidence of a serious attempt to analyse facets of the gentlemanly configuration. In different degrees in each case, however, the "marketplace" plot and sentimentality make it difficult to take De Forest's social criticism very seriously. Evidently he wrote these novels mainly because he wanted money. The cheques he received for this work did not add vast sums to his bank account. Indeed, each time he endorsed one he merely made another entry in the debit column of that account book which records his literary merit

Notes

[1] Jay Martin, Harvests of Change (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1967), p. 34.

[2] Frank Bergmann, The Worthy Gentleman of Democracy (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitatsverlag, 1971), p. 58, n. 25.

[3] Edwin Harrison Cady, The Gentleman in America Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1949), p. 19.

[4] Ibid., p. 20.

[5] Seacliff (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1859), p. 19. Page numbers for all further quotations from this edition will be cited in parentheses.

[6] "New Books," rev. of Seacliff, New York Times, 25 June 1859, p. 2.

[7] Edward Wagenknecht, Cavalcade of the American Novel (New York: Holt, 1952), p. 105, n. 14.

[8] Philip Hastings Ford, "The Techniques of John William De Forest, Transitional Novelist," Diss. Ohio State 1953, p. 104.

[9] James F. Light, John William De Forest, Twayne's United States Authors Series, 82 (New York: Twayne, 1965), p. 55.

[10] Lionel Trilling, "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," in The Liberal Imagination (1950; rpt. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), p. 205.

[11] James William Gargano, "John W. De Forest: A Critical Study of His Novels," Diss. Cornell 1955, pp. 67-72.

[12] Light, p. 55.

[13] Ford, p. 103.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., p. 111.

[16] Ibid., p. 104.

[17] Ibid., p. 111.

[18] Ibid., p. 104.

[19] Gargano, p. 82.

[20] Ibid., p. 66.

[21] Light, p. 62.

[22] Gargano, p. 209.

[23] Light, p. 130.

[24] The Wetherel Affair (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1872), p. 73. Page numbers for all further quotations from this edition will be cited in parentheses.

[25] See The Wetherel Affair, p. 216.

[26] Some change in his character is evident prior to the murder. When he falls in love with Nestoria he begins to value goodness and forgets the past: "He forgot all the evil of his life, and seemed to himself not merely to be good now, but to have been good always. The prime cause of this transformation, it will be easily guessed, was that he was somewhat in love" (45).

[27] Light, p. 136, makes this point.

[28] See The Wetherel Affair, p. 47.

[29] Light, p. 137, and Gargano, p. 211, make a similar point.

[30] Gargano, p. 207.

[31] Light, p. 137.

[32] "Recent Literature," rev. of The Wetherel Affair, Atlantic Monthly, 34 (Aug. 1874), 229.

[33] Gargano, p. 213, and Light, p. 135.

[34] Both compare De Forest unfavourably with other writers. Gargano, p. 214, says De Forest lacks the "real understanding" of Howells. Light, p. 135, says that, in comparison, Sinclair Lewis "is a master of subtlety."

[35] Morton L. Ross, "'Manners': An Addition to a Vocabulary for American Studies," Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association Bulletin, 22 (March 1968), 18.

[36] Ford, p. 60.

[37] Bergmann, p. 69. He is here quoting The Wetherel Affair, p. 102.

[38] Bergmann, p. 72.

[39] Light, p. 133, makes this point.

[40] Gargano, p. 207, makes this point.

[41] Nestoria has sailed from the land of the Nestorians where her father is a missionary. She flees from the scene of the murder in a boat. From that point on, water images cluster around her to suggest her emotional turbulence and her perilous moral and mental condition. These images are not much superior to the one I have quoted. Several examples may be cited: "the soul before her [Imogen] was in truly deep waters; . . . she seemed to discern a spirit tottering and sinking amid raging, obscure billows" (120); "One is reminded of a water insect setting out to tread the rushings of Niagara. And yet it may be that water insects do skip over the thunderous cataract in safety" (97); "It seemed to him [Lehming] that he had found a soul shipwrecked on the reefs of some unknown sorrow . . ." (123); "It seemed to her [Nestoria] wandering as she was in a tempest of trouble, that she had met some holy one walking upon the waters, able to stretch forth a victorious hand and save" (144). It should also be noted that Chapter VII, a florid presentation of Nestoria's dilemma, is titled "In the Depths."

[42] Light, p. 130, uses the same quotation I have selected among examples to support this point.

[43] Gargano, p. 221.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Bergmann, p. 72.

[47] Gargano, p. 221.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., p. 222.

[51] Ford, p. 113.

[52] Ibid., p. 114.

[53] Justine's Lovers (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1878), p. 61. Page numbers for all further quotations from this edition will be cited in parentheses.

[54] Gargano, p. 286.

[55] Arthur Hobson Quinn, American Fiction (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1936), p. 173.

CHAPTER IV

THE FABLE OF NATIONAL MANNERS AND MORALS: MISS RAVENEL'S CONVERSION

I

Civil War novels produced during and immediately after the conflict were predictable and mediocre works. In Fiction Fights the Civil War (1957), Robert A. Lively offers an explanation:

> The earliest general conventions governing production of the novels grew from sentimental reactions to war of professional and amateur lady writers. These ladies fixed the pattern of tales in the 1860's and early 1870's with their admiration for Christian sacrifice and their uncritical and violently partisan pride in sectional virtues.[1]

The battles described by such ladies were costume pageants, as William Dean Howells wryly noted in the Atlantic Monthly (July, 1867): "The heroes of young-lady writers in the magazines have been everywhere fighting the late campaigns over again, as young ladies would have fought them."[2] De Forest's Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty (1867) was obviously a different kind of work. Its battles were grim struggles for survival filled with the pungent odours of gunsmoke and blood. Howells enthusiastically declared that De Forest was probably "the first to treat the war really and artistically."[3]

Contemporary critics have generally followed Howells by praising Miss Ravenel's Conversion as a realistic war novel. Most frequently, they have testified to the artistic merit Howells mentioned by comparing De Forest's novel with the most famous of all Civil War novels, Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage (1895). Alexander Cowie, for example, says that "In the realistic descriptions of actual battle scenes De Forest excelled all nineteenth-century American novelists except Stephen Crane."[4] Other critics have insisted that De Forest's work is not inferior to Crane's. Thus, David M. Potter praises "battle episodes of an astonishing authenticity--more natural and no less powerful than those of Stephen Crane in The Red Badge of Courage, and as keenly perceptive as any in our literature."[5] Gordon Haight has gone even farther. He praises De Forest's "true realism" at the expense of Crane's "somewhat decadent impressionism."[6] The result of such comparisons has been an expansion of Howells's statement of the novel's historical significance as the first realistic war novel. Haight, for example, declares that Miss Ravenel's Conversion is "quite the best story of the Civil War."[7] Alfred E. Stone is even more forceful: "no better novel of the Civil War has ever been written."[8]

The authentic and powerful depictions of battle-field conditions in Miss Ravenel's Conversion definitely warrant praise. They make it an enduring monument standing virtually alone among the literary ruins of Civil War novels.

The celebration of these scenes and the attendant concern with gauging the extent of De Forest's realism however, has often led to a narrow interpretation and estimate of the novel. Miss Ravenel's Conversion is not, as the critics I have cited imply, primarily a war novel. It is not, that is, a novel in which the presentation of military activities is central. In fact, only about one-fifth of the novel's thirty-seven chapters are principally concerned with such matters. On several occasions De Forest even refuses to describe military life, thus reminding his readers that it is not at all central to his purpose: "These things are matters of public and not private history. . . . But I am simply writing a biography of Miss Ravenel, illustrated by sketches of her three or four relatives and intimates."[9]

Although the Civil War is not important as a military operation, it is significant as the historical context of Lillie Ravenel's biography. At the beginning of the novel, De Forest says that "every great historical event reverberates in a very remarkable manner through the fortunes of a multitude of private and even secluded individuals" (1). This reverberation manifests itself in the fact that the "Southern rebellion" brings Lillie, a Southerner, and Edward Colburne, a Northerner, "into interesting juxtaposition" (1). The historical event, that is, forces into contact two people with different values who would not normally have met. There is, however, another meaning inherent in De Forest's statement about the reverberation of historical events. The statement insists not only that effects of historical forces can be seen in the individual's life, but also that, as a consequence, similar or congruent explanations may be offered for both historical events and for the conduct of individuals.[10] Armed with this conviction, De Forest thus can employ a few central characters to illustrate the broader social and moral effects of the war. He can, then, conduct what Jay Martin calls "a meditation on history made concrete in character"[11] because the Civil War provides a context for the depiction and analysis of manners and a pattern for a social fable. Miss Ravenel's Conversion, thus, is not simply a biography of an individual; it is also, symbolically, the biography of the nation.

The principal concern throughout Miss Ravenel's Conversion is the deleterious effects of provincialism in manners and morals. In "The Great American Novel," De Forest expresses the belief that America is a "nation of provinces, and each province claims to be the court."[12] Miss Ravenel's Conversion is his comparative character study of the provinces; his evaluation of their claims, and his vision of the truly national character which could develop as one result of the Civil War.

De Forest's attack on provincialism is carefully orchestrated to promote evaluative comparisons through the "interesting juxtaposition" of provincial types. The major shifts in setting--the action begins in the North, moves to the South, and concludes in the North--divide the novel into three main sections. In each section De Forest juxtaposes natives and visitors from the other region. At the same time, however, he displays the effects of enlarging experience on two of his provincial types, Lillie and Colburne. Each section of the novel, then, constitutes one act in a drama tracing the escape of individuals from the confines of provincialism.

The first section, covering Chapters One to Eight, is an exposition of provincialism. Here Lillie, quick to realize its manifestations in Colburne and her New England hosts, reveals herself to be equally limited. She displays a parochial narrowness and prejudice through her emotional attachment to a congenial myth of Southern civilization. The lengthy second section is a story of growth. Lillie undergoes new experiences, many of a painful nature, which remove her cultural blinders and undermine her emotional commitment to the South. In the final section, which begins with Chapter Thirty-Two, the change in Lillie is completed. She renounces provincialism and testifies to the power of her "conversion" by uniting her life with Colburne's.

The story of a love between a Union soldier and a rebel belle, which De Forest uses to attack provincialism, is not original with him. Lively notes that others had used it before De Forest and that "the device is by my count the most frequently used theme of the Civil War novel."[13] De Forest's story, then is a somewhat conventional symbol of the reconciliation of the warring sections. The novel thus is essentially a social fable in which De Forest, through the love story, illustrates his vision of the nation's destiny. In this fable, Lillie is like the South. Passionate, she rejects the morally upright North, in the person of Colburne, because she is sensually attracted to the Old South which the "magnetic" Carter represents. De Forest shows, however, that, like the South, Carter is morally corrupt: he has an illicit affair with another representative of Southern immorality, Mrs. Larue. Carter's violation of domestic moral order corresponds to the upheaval of political order caused by Southern secession.[14] His ante-bellum code, however, dies with him. Lillie is then free to marry Colburne. De Forest clearly instructs us to interpret this marriage as a symbol of a new national union: "The nation was not more certainly guided by the hand of Providence in overthrowing slavery than was this man in loving this woman" (462). The love story, supported by Dr. Ravenel's choric pronouncements, thus functions as a fable which illustrates the development of the new national character to be formed through the charitable union of Southern manners and Northern morality.

Although Miss Ravenel's Conversion is obviously designed as a social fable to serve a didactic purpose, it is not a simple allegory. The characters possess too much life to be simply counters pushed along a path to illustrate certain concepts. I will argue in this chapter, then, that Miss Ravenel's Conversion is a social fable which succeeds through procedures associated with the novel of manners. I will support this argument in two ways. First, I will analyse the initial eight chapters which, I contend, have been unjustly ignored. I will show that in them De Forest establishes the value of his characters as agents in the social fable by making them credible as provincial types. Secondly, I will show that in the later portions of the novel De Forest builds upon the initial comedy of manners by employing the credible provincial types in a love story which is the narrative vehicle for his social fable. I will demonstrate, then, that this love story constitutes an attack on provincialism and traces an escape from it in terms of both the literal biography of Lillie Ravenel and the symbolic biography of the nation. The ultimate purpose of this argument is to establish that, on the basis of his success in Miss Ravenel's Conversion, De Forest deserves recognition as a genuine literary artist.

II

The first section of Miss Ravenel's Conversion, which describes life in New Boston, and the central portion of the novel, which contains the celebrated battle scenes, differ in certain ways. In the New Boston section, the focus is sharply maintained on the social interaction of the central characters, the piquant satire is sustained over a longer period, and the presentation seems quite relaxed when compared to the tautness of the battle chapters. These differences may account for a neglect of the New Boston chapters by contemporary critics, many of whom have been concerned with promoting interest in an unjustly neglected author. They have, therefore, concentrated on De Forest's more overtly dramatic achievement of portraying battle scenes and characters realistically. Consequently, the majority of critics have made only cursory comments about the New Boston chapters.

A few critics who have made explicit or implicit judgments about De Forest's account of New Boston manners have tended to view it as a flaw in a realistic novel. Thus, James W. Gargano, in analysing flaws in De Forest's realism, says that "A tendency toward satire and a breakdown of objectivity can also be discerned in De Forest's sketch of New Boston."[15] Gargano says that it is "racy, clever satire, but it is not realism."[16] The evaluations of other critics have been implied through comparison. This is Harold H. Kolb's method. After listing the "nonrealistic techniques" that make De Forest a "transitional author," he states that "De Forest often drops his leisurely comedy of manners to present sharp and vivid scenic portrayals of the dusty horrors of the battlefield."[17] Kolb's language clearly implies that such leisureliness prevents the comedy of manners from being "sharp and vivid" and that, hence, it is less artistic than the battle scenes.

David M. Potter makes a similar comparison. He seems to regard the initial section as only good-humoured raillery, but the battle scenes as serious and "perceptive." Thus, his extensive description of the battle scenes reveals that he accepts them as artistically superior:

> The scenes of the opening chapters was the New England town of New Boston . . . and the tone was one of urbane satire upon the puritanism and decorum of society. As the story develops, the style grows less bantering and the author provides, direct from his own experience, battle episodes of an astonishing authenticity--more natural and no less powerful than those of Stephen Crane in The Red Badge of Courage, and as keenly perceptive as any in our literature. At the same time he introduces a gallery of full-blooded and animate characters such as American literature had not seen up to that time. . . .[18]

Two points about Potter's judgments may be made immediately. First, De Forest's New Boston chapters also come "directly from his own experience" and possess the kind of "authenticity" which is at the heart of all good satire. The reviewer for The Nation, for instance, recognized that De Forest presented an account of his home, New Haven, in particular and of "the better sort of college towns" in general.[19] Second, with the exception of Madame Larue, the major characters are introduced, not in the battle episodes as Potter says, but in the New Boston chapters, and these chapters thus provide important insights into their later conduct.

The central critical issue which emerges from such comparisons by Kolb and Potter is whether the New Boston chapters constitute an artistic flaw or a vital contribution to the novel. The issue can be resolved only through a clear understanding of precisely what De Forest accomplished in the comedy of manners.

Clarence Gordon perceptively noted, in the Atlantic Monthly (November, 1873), that De Forest had created "a salubrious satire, a presentation of ourselves as others see us."[20] Through this presentation, De Forest attempts to alert Northerners to their own provincialism. His own explanation of his reason for locating New Boston in the Yankee state of Barataria serves as an overt sign of this intent. De Forest defends his fictional geography by claiming that it is necessary "so that I may tell my story freely without being accused of misrepresenting this private individual, or insulting that public functionary, or burlesquing any self-satisfied community" (2). De Forest thus underscores the general "authenticity" of his satiric attack by refusing to apply it too narrowly to an actual New Haven. Furthermore, the final phrase hints De Forest's feeling that New Englanders are so satisfied with their sense of moral superiority, as demonstrated and celebrated during the war, that they do not recognize their own weaknesses: stiff manners, excessive intellectualism, and rigid dogmatism.

De Forest attacks New England provincialism by presenting the New Bostonians as lacking an engaging social character and as living in a society which is cold, cramped, sterile, and inhospitable. His mordant comment is that

"New Boston is not a lively nor a sociable place" because "it is inhabited chiefly by New Englanders" (15). He points to Puritanism, "the prevailing faith of that land and race," as one of the major causes for this dreary social life because it "is not only not favorable but is absolutely noxious to social gayeties, amenities, and graces" (15). Furthermore, he notes that New Bostonians cannot get along well with themselves since their city "is divided into more than the ordinary number of cliques and coteries, and they are hedged from each other by an unusually thorny spirit of repulsion" (15).

De Forest conducts this attack mainly through the "interesting juxtaposition" of Northern and Southern types. In each meeting with the Southerners, that is, the Northerners display stereotypical or conditioned responses which are awkward, inappropriate, and even ludicrous. In this way De Forest demonstrates the superiority of the Southern social character and deflates Northern moral smugness, inordinate pride, and self-righteousness. The attack, however, is not aimed completely at Northerners. Provincialism itself is the ultimate target. These chapters show how provincial manners and attitudes towards them shape and influence the relationship between individuals. Through the depiction of manners, De Forest displays in small compass the differences which led to large-scale armed conflict. The comedy of manners, then, is not a jarring flaw in the novel. Rather, it is essential as the basis for De Forest's sustained attack on provincialism in the social fable.

To support this contention, I will demonstrate four points about the New Boston section. First, I will show that De Forest clearly establishes the major characters as types. Second, I will show that he successfully employs these types to criticize Northern manners and morals. Third, I will note some of the instances in which De Forest gives his types enough vitality to prevent them from seeming only puppets dressed to play roles in the social fable. Fourth, I will discuss the love story, which is initiated in this section, as a natural development of De Forest's display of manners and as the plot foundation for the fable. De Forest, of course, does not work in the serial order I am using for this discussion. From the beginning, for example, he gives humanity to his types. Through this kind of discussion, however, it will be possible to establish the significance of the New Boston section and to suggest something of the artistry which makes the novel so successful.

Miss Ravenel's Conversion begins shortly after the arrival in New Boston of two Southern refugees, Dr. Ravenel and his daughter, Lillie. They and the young New Bostonian who befriends them, Colburne, are clearly established as distinct types in the initial section of the novel.

Throughout this section, De Forest makes Dr.

Ravenel the most visible standard of reference for a criticism of Northern manners and morals. A persecuted Unionist, a type common in early Civil War fiction,[21] Ravenel is not a provincial but a cosmopolitan who is a composite of regional virtues. On the one hand, he exemplifies the highest development of traditional manners and is, therefore, a representative of a graceful, polished Southern aristocracy. Thus, he is a "charming acquaintance" (5) because he displays "the prevailing communicativeness of his open-hearted fellow-citizens of the South" (9). For this reason, he differs noticeably in manner from the "socially stiff and unsympathetic" (15) New Bostonians. On the other hand, Ravenel manifests in his Unionist sympathies the moral fervour of the Northern Puritans. Ravenel himself explains his unique composite nature by noting that although he was born in the South and has worked most of his life in New Orleans, he was educated in the North and has visited Europe. He believes that such varied experiences have freed him "'from the prejudices and trammels of geographic morality'" (51) because his "'conscience soon found the underground railroad'" (52).

Although he supports the Union cause and interprets the war from a moral point of view, even to the point of seeming at times to be a Northern ideologue, Ravenel is essentially correct in his claim. His moral outlook is considerably less provincial than that of the New Bostonians. His concern, unlike theirs, is with great principles, not with narrow dogmatism. The difference between him and the New Bostonians is hinted at in the episode involving Mrs. Ruggles, which I shall examine shortly, and is made explicit in the final New Boston section. The point I will assert here is that just as Ravenel represents the highest development of Southern manners, he also represents the highest development of Northern morals. In broad outline, then, he is De Forest's Ideal American, the worthy gentleman of democracy, the type of a truly national character.

De Forest portrays Lillie as sharing her father's "sympathetic character as well as his graceful cordiality and consequent charm of manner" (6). Like Ravenel, then, she is a type of the "socially charming" (7) Southerner. Lillie, however, does not share her father's political views. Unlike his experiences, hers have been too limited to give a cosmopolitan cast to her character. Because she has spent all of her brief life in the South, De Forest presents her as a type of the Southern provincial, a Southern belle who is the natural product of a narrow environment: "Like all young people and almost all women she was strictly local, narrowly geographical in her feelings and opinions. She was colored by the soil in which she had germinated and been nurtured; and during that year no flower could be red, white and blue in Louisiana" (10). As a provincial, Lillie possesses a "geographical morality" because her loyalty to the Southern cause is a product of emotional attachment to the South rather than of an intellectual assessment of complex issues.

Their friend, Colburne, is presented as a Northern type, the "representative of a staid puritanical aristocracy" (9). Like Lillie, he is young and inexperienced and, thus, has been shaped by his own environment. Significantly, the same image of a seed, which is used to present Lillie as the product of an environment which makes her blossom as a rebel, is used later in the novel to present Colburne as a person whose character has been stunted: "Colburne, whose character, although only half developed in consequence of youth, modesty, and Puritan education, is nevertheless one of those germs which promise much beauty and usefulness" (223). Initially shy, awkward, and sternly moralistic, Colburne thus typifies many of the limitations of the Northern character. As a "true-born, industrious Yankee" (69), he also displays the intellectual and moral strengths of the North. He is dedicated to productive activity, to the performance of duty--whether it consists in supporting an ill and impoverished mother or in defending the Union--and to the abolition of slavery and consequent establishment of a true democracy.

The meeting of these three initiates the comparison of Northern and Southern manners in the novel, but a fourth important character, Colonel Carter, should be mentioned here because he is also employed in these chapters as a type. Carter, a Virginian serving in the Northern army, displays none of the angularity of the New Bostonians. In his veins there flows "old Colonial blue blood" (22). Thus, like Ravenel, he is a type of the Southern aristocrat. Their manners, however, do distinguish them from each other. Each displays the manners of a "thorough man of the world," but Carter lacks the Doctor's "insinuating suavity" (20). Instead, he possesses a "cavalier dash" (22), a graceful, masculine, confident manner which suggests that he is not as scrupulous in his affairs as the Doctor is. Ravenel, in fact, recognizes in Carter the familiar outlines of the "bacchanalian New Orleans type of gentility" (26). The narrator's comment that Carter had been a "wasteful and neglectful husband" (23) lends weight to this recognition. In spite of his service in the Union army, then, Carter is a type who is completely Southern in manners and morals. This typicalness is insisted upon later in the novel: "In his strange passions, his capacity of domestic sympathies, his strange conscience (as sensitive on some points as callous on others), his spendthrift habits, his inclination to swearing and drinking, his mixture in short of gentility and barbarism, he was a true child of his class and State" (149). It must be noted, however, that since the brunt of the attack in this section is on Northern limitations, De Forest is deliberately vague about the extent of Carter's immorality so that he can emphasize Carter's pleasing social character as a Southerner.

By comparing these types with each other and with certain representative New Bostonians, De Forest generates his criticism of Northern provincialism. This criticism is particularly concentrated in the first four chapters. Here De Forest uses two synoptic episodes to reveal first Northern social awkwardness and then Northern dogmatism. These brief episodes are followed by two longer ones which build upon them with a display of a greater cross-section of manners.

The first of the synoptic episodes concentrates on the unnecessary constraint displayed by New Bostonians. It describes Dr. Ravenel's encounter with a puritan professor. Their functions as types of their respective social environments are emphasized as De Forest describes their difference in manner in terms of the climate of their native regions. The professor, adversely affected by his physical and cultural environment, not only has a "frigid hand" but also an "arctic spirit" (17). Incapable of expressing himself adequately in social encounters, he actually seems encrusted in ice. It is only when Dr. Ravenel shakes his hand fervently and beams with his Southern "tropical warmth" (17) that the encrustation melts enough to allow him to smile. A Southerner like Ravenel, "a radiant, smiling, universally sympathetic and perennially sociable gentleman" (17), is a curiosity in New England. Dr. Ravenel believes that he is "'nothing more than ordinarily polite'" (56), as he says on another similar occasion, but his demonstrative manners differ from "the unobtrusive New Boston fashion" (56) to such a degree that they seem, as Lillie says, "'something very extra-ordinary here'" (56). Puritans, like the Professor, do not actively seek casual social intercourse as Ravenel does. Instead, and this is a biting comment on the quality of Northern social life, the Professor's "afternoon recreation" has been "a walk in the cemetery" (17).

The second episode illustrates the influence of rigid dogmatism by describing one New England woman's reaction to Ravenel's Southern manners. Mrs. Ruggles is a type of "those conscientious but uncharitable ladies" (17) who make Northern life so socially forbidding. She is described as even more of a victim of her environment than the Professor:

> Thin-lipped, hollow-cheeked, narrow-chested, with only one lung and an intermittent digestion, without a single rounded outline or graceful movement, she was a sad example of what the New England east winds can do in enfeebling and distorting the human form divine. Such are too many of the New Boston women when they reach that middle age which should be physically an era of adipose, and morally of charity. Even her smile was a woeful phenomenon; it seemed to be rather a symptom of pain than an expression of pleasure; it was a kind of griping smile, like that of an infant with colic (17-18).

The geographical comparisons initiated in the first episode are maintained here to indicate Northern parochialism. Mrs. Ruggles, alarmed by Ravenel's graceful Southern manners, doubts "whether poison might not infect the pleasant talk, as malaria fills the orange-scented air of Louisiana" (17). She instinctively distrusts Ravenel's Southern manners as a potential source of evil. For her, morality is signified by conformity to the staid manner of the New Bostonians and obvious adherence to orthodox puritan views. Colburne hits at this ludicrous confusion of values in a sarcastic attack on the social character of New Boston: "'To condemn a man because he is charming! If the converse of the rule is true, Mrs. Ruggles--if unpleasant people are to be admired because they are such--then some of us New Bostonians ought to be objects of adoration'" (18).

These synoptic displays of regional differences are the foundation of a more extended display in the major episodes of the first four chapters, the Whitewood dinner party and the picnic. In the party episode, moral considerations are not entirely absent, but the emphasis, as in Ravenel's meeting with the Professor, is on differences between Southern and Northern manners. In the picnic episode, the emphasis is on the moral implications of manners, as in the episode with Mrs. Ruggles.

The party episode begins with a description of the Whitewood house, a symbol of that preoccupation with intellectual order and balance which makes New Boston a "city of geometry and Puritanism" (17):

> Trim, regular, geometrical, one half of the structure weighing to an ounce just as much as the other half, and the whole perhaps forming some exact fraction of the entire avoirdupois of the globe, the very furniture distributed at measured distances, it was precisely

> such a building as the New Bostonian soul would naturally create for itself (13).

Lillie Ravenel immediately notices this similarity between the architecture and the personalities of the inhabitants. She characterizes the New Bostonians as square, like their homes. Hurt by her mocking tone, Colburne asks what good would come of being any other shape. Lillie quickly responds that New Bostonians would at least be more picturesque. Through this question and answer, De Forest establishes a basic difference in Northern and Southern attitudes. Northerners, like Colburne, seek utilitarian or moral values in everything. Southerners, like Lillie, recognize that surface elements--architecture or manners--are important because they add to the quality of life by making it more interesting and pleasant.

The superiority of the Southern social personality is displayed in compact comparisons between square Northerners and picturesque Southerners. The host, Professor Whitewood, is the most animated of the New Bostonians because he is the only one who attempts to engage in the general conversation. His single attempt at wit, however, is made "with a kind of ponderous dexterity, like an elephant backing off a shaky bridge, and taking his time about it" (25). The graceful Dr. Ravenel, in contrast, is a "fluent and zealous Louisianian" who entertains with "lively satire and declamation directed against slavery and its rebellious partisans" (15). There is also an even more striking difference between their daughters. Lillie, the Southern belle, is relaxed, gay, and youthful. Her Northern counterpart, the "awkward but good Miss Whitewood," is incapable of natural girlish behaviour and seems "prematurely middle-aged" (15). The studious habits of New Bostonians have made her incapable of conducting flirtations, as Lillie does, and almost incapable of conversation.

The most important of these comparisons, however, are between Carter and the two young New Bostonians, John Whitewood, Jr. and Colburne. Carter's "cavalier dash" is displayed in his ability to dominate conversation and to move from flirtatious advances toward Lillie to discussions of military affairs that are at once honest and entertaining. Whitewood, Jr. has none of Carter's social ability or robustness. He has attended Winslow University, but his health has been so affected by the experience that he resembles Mrs. Ruggles:

> Thin, pale and almost sallow, with pinched features surmounted by a high and roomy forehead, tall slender, narrow-chested, and fragile in form, shy, silent, and pure as the timidest of girls, he was an example of what can be done with youthful blood, muscle, mind and feeling by the studious severities of a Puritan university (19).

This victim of the Northern environment is totally incapable of carrying on a simple conversation. Compared to the virile Carter, he is an "hermaphrodite soul" with a "cadaverous countenance" (20). Fittingly, he takes up a position on the female side of the dining table. De

Forest's thrusts at this decimated creature are entirely functional: they not only reveal the limitations of the Northern personality but also make Lillie's contempt for the Northern type and her fascination with Carter understandable.

Whitewood, of couse represents an extreme. This "pale bit of human celery" (26) not only seems limp when compared to the masculine Carter, but also when compared to Colburne. Colburne, in fact, is regarded as the epitome of New Boston manhood because he is a "popular favorite" (18) who is considered to be "the finest and most agreeable young man in New Boston" (19). He is outstanding, however, primarily because of his society's limitations: "To people who, like the New Bostonians, did not demand a high finish of manner, this young man was charming" (18). In the presence of Carter, Colburne displays none of this supposed charm. Like Whitewood he displays the prevailing New Boston awkwardness and shyness and feels himself helplessly shrinking to "grasshopper mediocrity" (20).

De Forest, then, employs Colburne to display the defects of provincialism in even the best of Northerners. Colburne displays his limitations particularly in his reactions to Carter. The narrator notes sadly that Colburne almost rejoices when he detects "signs of excitement" (26) in Carter who has freely helped himself to the sherry the hostess has supplied "from the family medical stores with a painful twinge of conscience" (21). Colburne naively feels that Miss Ravenel could not care for a man who is "inordinately convivial" (26). This indicates Colburne's ingrained imperception. He does not, or cannot, appreciate the fact that Lillie, brought up in an entirely different social environment, "had been too much accustomed to just such gentlemen in New Orleans society to see anything disgusting or even surprising in the manner of the Lieutenant-Colonel" (26). What seems like an obvious moral lapse to this Northern provincial is nothing more than expected behaviour to Lillie.

This typical Northern moral stiffness is again displayed after the party when, "With a temperance man's usual lack of charity to people given to wine," Colburne judges Carter to be "disgracefully intoxicated" (27). Colburne, in fact, must constantly struggle with the oppressive Northern habit of making simplified judgments, like those of Mrs. Ruggles, in order that he not "puritanically decide that a man who drank and swore could not be a good officer" (79). Colburne's provincialism renders him incapable of understanding Carter because the "picturesque ins and outs" of Carter's "moral architecture" are different from the "severe plainness of the spiritual temples common in New Boston" (79). Thus, De Forest establishes Colburne, who is at home in the plain, square world symbolized by the Whitewood house, as in need of enlarging experiences.

In the picnic episode, De Forest displays the moral interpretation which both Northerners and Southerners give to the manners of the other. Dr. Ravenel is disturbed by the difference between proprieties in New Boston and New Orleans. He is reluctant to allow Lillie to attend because such a picnic would be impossible in New Orleans where "The severe proprieties of French manners with regard to demoiselles were in considerable favor" (38). The Northerners, however, see nothing unusual about the picnic. It is but another example of "the simple and virtuous ways of New Boston, where young ladies have a freedom which in larger and wickeder cities is only accorded to married women" (94). The cavalier Carter has a third opinion. To him the whole affair is a foolish "nursery sort of picnic" (38) because the party consists of "juvenile gentlemen" (37) and older ladies. From the beginning he cannot treat it seriously.

The episode is a superb satire of manners. De Forest makes the Northerners seem ludicrous by overstating their reactions to Carter's champagne and cigars. He conveys the mixed attitudes of fear and desire the picnickers display by language which brilliantly evokes the religious basis of New Bostonian manners. When Carter produces six bottles of champagne the majority stare "with a holy horror equal to their wicked joy" (40). The distribution of cigars brings the "moral excitation" (41) to its peak. So strong is the puritan character of the

New Bostonians that Carter's act of Southern hospitality becomes a moral issue which divides the party. On the one hand, there are those who are willing to try the champagne and cigars "if it were only for the wicked fun of the thing" (41). These sinners are opposed, on the other hand, by some who carry on the stern tradition of their grim forefathers. These people not only do not want to try the champagne and cigars, but insist that nobody else should enjoy them. They discuss the affair with puritan "conscientious bitterness" (41). To them it assumes the proportions of a moral "atrocity" (41). Significantly, the thirty-five year old maiden displays "girlish enthusiasm" (41) only when she anticipates Mrs. Whitewood's suppression of this unparalleled pleasure-making. That matron, however, cannot bring herself to interrupt the "scene of wicked revelry" (41) because she does not have a sufficiently strong will. She merely looks on "in much horror of spirit" (41) until it is too late to act. When Carter finally offers a glass to the zealously puritan maiden who wished the whole scene stopped, she refuses "with an air of virtuous indignation" Carter considers "uncivil" (42).

This episode highlights the degree to which puritanism has permeated New Boston society. It shows that the New Bostonians consistently view manners in moral terms. They are as inflexible in manners as they are in religious principles because they assume that their peculiar manners are the only acceptable and, hence, the only moral ones. Carter criticises this self-righteous provincialism when he says that the New Bostonians "'are not immaculate'" (42). His terminology underlines a point De Forest makes through his description of Mrs. Ruggles: the moral interpretation of manners depends on regional perspectives. Carter himself is aware of this relativity because he points out that the very people who regard him with "'horror'" commit what he considers "'imprudences'" (43). As an example he notes that the New Bostonian custom of unchaperoned couples strolling off into the woods together "'would draw the frown of society in other places'" (42).

The implications of this episode are far-reaching. The narrator has previously claimed that, although the New Bostonians have angular manners and opinions, "they have strong sympathies for what is clearly right, and can become enthusiastic in a matter of conscience and benevolence" (15). The seemingly complimentary nature of this comment is severely qualified by the picnic episode and the one involving Mrs. Ruggles. In both cases, New Bostonians become ridiculously "enthusiastic in a matter of conscience." As De Forest demonstrates repeatedly, Northerners are "socially stiff and unsympathetic" because they are heirs of puritans whose dogmatism failed to humanize them. Near the end of the novel, for example, Dr. Ravenel makes this point in talking about the original puritans: "'Dead as they are, they govern this continent.

At the same time they must have been disagreeable to live with. Their doctrines made them hard in thought and manner. When I think of their grimness, uncharity, inclemency, I am tempted to say that the sinners of those days were the salt of the earth'" (437). De Forest alludes again to this hardness, which causes Northerners to judge morals on the basis of manners, when he insists that Lillie "was far more religious than some of the straiter New Bostonians were able to believe when they knew that she played whist and noted how tastefully she was dressed, and how charmingly graceful she was in social intercourse" (436).

The picnic episode, then, prepares for a continued attack on the uncharitable narrowness which leads Northerners to test morality by conformity to their own social stiffness. Furthermore, it acts as a kind of balance to Ravenel's continual praise of Northerners for supporting a just cause in the war. The Northerners are "enthusiastic in a matter of conscience" in opposing the South, but this is a great moral issue. Their support of the Union does indicate, then, that they possess, as Ravenel says, a "'cold moral purity'" (472). Ravenel also notes, however, that, in manner, "'A native, untravelled New Bostonian is rather too much in the style of an iceberg'" (471). Ravenel tends to focus on the morality of a people supporting a grand cause, but De Forest clearly indicates through the portrait of Ravenel himself that morality and graceful manners can be reconciled. Similarly, he shows through the portrait of Mrs. Ruggles and through the picnic episode that adherence to lofty principles does not preclude reprehensible pettiness in interpersonal relations. In the initial New Boston chapters, then, De Forest prepares for one of his central points: the need for the coldly intellectual moral rectitude of the Northerners to be warmed by the graceful and expansive manners of the Southerners.

While the major characters are, as I have shown, clearly employed as types in order to generate a criticism of Northern provincialism, they all possess a certain degree of vitality. De Forest makes his study of regional manners successful by providing each character with a distinct personality and emotions which add depth to the displays of typical behaviour.

De Forest expends the most effort in providing Dr. Ravenel with a vivid personality and character. De Forest endows him with idiosyncrasies which make him colourful, but have little or nothing to do with Ravenel's function as a type of the polished Southerner. Ravenel, for example, is portrayed as somewhat absent-minded and as almost fanatical about mineralogical studies. More importantly, De Forest makes him vivid through his conversations, expecially his denunciations of the South. These reveal a mind which is often witty and always forceful. These sallies do have thematic importance because they express a belief in moral progress and the divine sanction of the war,[22] but Ravenel can be regarded as a choric figure in only a limited way. The general substance of his teleological interpretation of events seems to be supported by the novel's action, but Ravenel's expression of his views is strictly determined by his personal condition. For very human reasons, Ravenel indulges in the rhetorical excesses of a Northern ideologue and De Forest's indication of these reasons gives credibility to Ravenel as an individual. In the first place, Ravenel's habitual satire against the South is the result of a tendency to want to entertain others whom he automatically assumes to share his interests. On such occasions he manifests a proclivity for hyperbole since, "The Doctor was somewhat apt to exaggerate, whether in praise or blame, when he became interested in a subject" (48). At other times, De Forest makes it clear that Ravenel's extravagant condemnations of the South are expressions of a natural, revengeful bitterness. De Forest thus makes him credible as a persecuted Southern Unionist who attacks his homeland because he now feels "that he had a right to abuse his own, especially after it had ill-treated him" (8). De Forest also gives Ravenel's emotional intensity credibility by emphasizing his concerns as a highly protective, remaining parent of a young girl. De Forest reveals Ravenel's "maternal anxieties" (46) about Lillie's welfare as being behind a mistaken attempt to make her accept his views by mocking hers. Thus, Ravenel's desire to protect his daughter's happiness is shown to be at the root of his habit of "cutting at" Colonel Carter's character indirectly "over the shoulders of the convivial gentlemen of Louisiana" (49-50). In all of these circumstances, De Forest makes Ravenel personably alive as a man "more disposed than most Anglo-Saxons towards monologue" (125).

De Forest also makes Lillie credible as a young, emotional, and naive girl. He characterizes her as such by recording her constant prattle, especially in her relationship with her father. Lillie, for instance, is shown frequently to remonstrate when Ravenel wears practical spectacles instead of the fashionable eyeglass she has chosen for him, or when he reveals his age by wrinkling his brow while poring over his mineralogical specimens. Lillie is also presented as resisting her father's treatment of her as a school girl. Like most young people, she tends to trust her own feelings more than her parent's knowledge. De Forest thus displays an affectionate friction in her relationship with Dr. Ravenel. Lillie, for example, does not recognize the South she loves in her father's denunciations of the planter class. She tries to counter his attacks with a defence that is as superficial as his charges are extreme. When Ravenel accuses Southerners of barbarism, she praises the manners of the "'better classes'" (10): "'If they don't know all about chemistry and mineralogy, they can talk delightfully to ladies. They are perfectly charming at receptions and dinner parties.

They are hospitable, too, and generous and courteous! Now I call that civilization. I say that such people are civilized'" (11).

This friction is most pronounced when Ravenel and Lillie are discussing Carter. She does not recognize Carter in her father's criticisms any more than she does the South. She does see signs of the "fast" type of Southern gentleman in Carter, but she has "an innocently inadequate conception of the meaning which the masculine sex attaches to that epithet" (91). What she knows is that men of this type "had good manners and were favorites with most ladies" (91). She finds such men pleasant because she has no understanding that their manners are an index of questionable moral character: "She had learned to consider the type a satisfactory one, without at all appreciating its moral signification" (91-92). Thus, it seems to her that her father is "unreasonably prejudiced" (91) against Carter. This leads her to passionate defences of this man whom Ravenel deeply distrusts and wants her to avoid. De Forest, then, displays an uneasiness underlying the affectionate relationship between father and daughter. He does this in one particularly brilliant and simple stroke, for example, when he notes that, at the Whitewood party, Lillie "thought it wise to propitiate her father's searching eye" by breaking off her conversation with Carter, "with his pleasant worldly ways and his fascinating masculine maturity," to join "that pale bit of human celery, John

Whitewood" (26). The observation speaks volumes about her relationship with her father, the attractive force of Carter, and the disgust she feels for Northern manhood. It adds a vivid emotional dimension to her portrait as a Southern belle which makes her subsequent romance not only inevitable but also credible.

De Forest is especially successful in bringing alive Carter. He makes Carter a self-confident and forceful man who is comfortable and perceptive in social encounters. The self-confidence is displayed in Carter's frank but good-natured discussion of the war at the Whitewood party. There he punctures the Northern belief in the war's short duration while frankly admitting that such a belief is deliberately cultivated to encourage recruits. Carter's pride is also displayed on several occasions. Ironically, he establishes a relationship with Colburne, whose temperance beliefs cause him to be unfavourably impressed with Carter, because alcohol gives Carter a "comprehensive love of fellow existences" (27). For this reason he befriends Colburne after the party. He allows the intimacy to develop because he is proud of his own status as a gentleman and recognizes that Colburne is a gentleman who could be developed into a competent officer. What makes Carter memorable, however, is De Forest's ability to make him seem at all times "a full-blown specimen of the male sex" (84). Whether he is sobering himself "'by main strength of will'" (36), flattering Lillie by talking "any kind of nothing" (23) about Louisiana, or arguing military policy with the Governor, Carter is a vivid and commandingly virile figure.

In contrast, De Forest does not give Colburne any of the colourful complexity of Carter or Ravenel. The primary reason, of course, is that De Forest must keep Colburne true to a far less dynamic type. Because he employs Colburne as a type of the Northern provincial, he must insist upon the sobriety and moral seriousness which are indices of the personality he is attacking. On most occasions, then, De Forest makes Colburne's behaviour absolutely typical. When Colburne's mother dies, for instance, he does not shed tears because "the Puritans and the children of Puritans do not weep easily; they are taught not to utter but to hide their emotions" (71). Nevertheless, De Forest does suggest some of the emotional intensity underlying Colburne's typical responses. For example, he notes that Colburne was "flushed with pleasure" (5) during his first meeting with Ravenel. This indicates not only Colburne's fervent loyalty which causes him to befriend someone who has suffered for the Union cause, but also his youthful admiration for a man so different in charm and eloquence from his usual acquaintances. Similarly, Colburne's reactions to Carter during the dinner party suggest emotions which are not completely attributable to his typical Northern moralism. De Forest clearly indicates here that Colburne is embarrassed at his own insignificance compared to Carter's "gigantic social stature" (20) and is consequently jealous because he is a young man himself anxious to please an attractive woman. Such small touches to not invest Colburne with great complexity, nor do they make him a highly individualized character. They are, however, details which make this a portrait rather than a generalized sketch of a type as is De Forest's presentation of the Whitewoods.

By making his characters three-dimensional, De Forest is able to employ them to establish a love story described by Alexander Cowie as "of uncommon interest."[23] This story involves a love triangle, the sides of which are formed by the relationships between Lillie, Carter, and Colburne. The story itself develops from and extends the significance of De Forest's comparison of manners. It does this, first, because it shows ingrained perceptions controlling Lillie's behaviour and thus constitutes a further criticism of provincialism. Secondly, it provides a social equivalent for the hostilities of the Civil War by displaying the way in which differences in attitudes towards manners separate the regional types. Thus, De Forest's establishment of this story in the New Boston section lays the basis for the rest of the novel as a fable detailing the reconciliation of provincial types in a national union.

The "uncommon interest" of the love story is generated by De Forest's skill in making Lillie's attitudes towards her suitors both true to life and thematically significant. He does this by clearly showing that Lillie finds Carter attractive both because of her situation as an individual and because of her character as a provincial type. To make the story true to life, then, De Forest uses the presentation of her relationship with her father to show that Lillie is a naive individual who, like most young people, is convinced she knows more than her parent. She finds Carter so sexually attractive as a "full-blown specimen of the male sex" (84) and she is so ignorant of the true meaning of the term "fast" that Dr. Ravenel's criticisms and warnings seem to her to be signs that he is "unreasonably prejudiced" (91) against Carter. This is entirely plausible as a case of a person trusting her own passion rather than the judgments of others and, thus, being all the more desirous of the forbidden fruit. To add to this plausibility and to give the story thematic significance, De Forest shows that Lillie is also a provincial conditioned to react favourably to Carter because of nostalgia for her beloved South: "He was too much in the style of a Louisiana planter not to be attractive to her homesick eyes" (84). Because she is so completely provincial, her father's claim that it is an example of a "'barbarous local vanity'" to call such a person a "'Southern gentleman'" (67) seems to be an unjustified and traitorous attack on her region and she again ignores his warnings.

In much the same way that he shows that Carter's Southern manners make him attractive to Lillie, De Forest shows that Colburne's Northern manners preclude any serious involvement with her. He presents Colburne, in fact, as not only lacking Carter's overt sexual appeal but as being rather too much of a New Bostonian for Lillie to love him. Throughout we are shown that Colburne has been "permeated to some extent by the solemn passion of Puritanism" (73). Thus, he cannot treat Lillie with "flippant gallantry" (90) as Carter does but must engage instead in "laborious and painful trifling" (95). True to the Northern type of manners, Colburne is "awkwardly sly" in arranging "ostensibly accidental meetings" with Lillie and acts like a "masculine blunderer" (57) when he does not realize that she would rather talk to him than dance with someone else.

De Forest gives this relationship thematic significance by stressing that Lillie and Colburne are separated by ideological differences because, as provincials, they cling to different regional myths. As a Southerner, Lillie believes in "the superior pluck and warlike skill of the people of her own section" (60). Colburne, however, accepts the "northern faith" (96) that the Union will quickly win. Their radically different notions of patriotism and their incompatible myths lead to "spiritual blows" (60) which damage Colburne's chances of quickly winning Lillie. De Forest reveals the biographical significance of their reactions after Lillie delivers the most serious of the spiritual blows, "a nervous shriek of joy" (61) on hearing of the rout of the Union forces at Bull Run. Colburne, who regards Lillie's reaction as not only socially improper but also blasphemous, tries at first to suppress his fondness for this traitor to his faith. He decides, however, that to avoid her would be "unchivalrous" (63). Colburne is not alone in nobly determining to make his manner inoffensive. When he next meets Lillie, she, "by a surprising effort of magnanimity and good nature" (66), suppresses her urges to make provoking remarks about the duration of the war. The importance of their mutual forbearance is directly stated by the narrator: "Thus without a compact, without an explanation, they accorded in a strain of mutual charity which predicted the ultimate conversion of one or the other" (63). It is, that is, by suppressing the manifestations of provincialism that Lillie and Colburne display the charity which will enable them, after they have escaped the confines of provincialism permanently by means of enlarging experience, to join together in a lasting union. This point, however, cannot be applied narrowly to a situation in Lillie's biography. De Forest's statement about the reverberation of historical events in private lives requires a symbolic reading of the episode. The entire episode, then, must be seen as a domestic equivalent of the political relationship between North and South. Such a reading is possible because De

Forest's presentation of Lillie and Colburne as provincial types enables them to be conceptual agents in the social fable. Thus, this episode is symbolically part of the nation's biography. For this reason, the charity displayed by Lillie and Colburne foreshadows what De Forest feels will be a lasting union of the warring sections.

The above analysis does not exhaust the New Boston chapters but it does, I think, indicate some of their richness and complexity. It also demonstrates that the New Boston chapters do make a vital contribution to Miss Ravenel's Conversion because De Forest mounts in them an effective attack on provincialism and establishes a love story as the foundation of a social fable. As I have shown, De Forest clearly presents his major characters as provincial types and does bring these types into "interesting juxtaposition." De Forest succeeds not only in making this juxtaposition reveal differences in typical provincial manners but also in showing how attitudes towards these manners influence and even shape relationships. He does this principally by making the unflattering comparison of New Boston manners with Southern manners the basis of a plausible love story.

De Forest's procedure of comparing manners and of showing how they influence conduct also establishes the love story as the central element in the symbolic biography of the nation. As types, the major characters have obvious value as representatives of their regions, a value insisted upon by De Forest's claim that similar explanations may be offered for historical events and the conduct of individuals. Thus, a circumscribing provincialism is presented as at the root of the failure of the North, which Colburne represents, to hold the South, represented by Lillie. This social fable, like the biography, looks forward to a time when both provincial types can escape their confinement and exercise charity in judging the other.

The effectiveness of the New Boston chapters, then, comes because De Forest's establishment of the social fable through the procedures of the novel of manners inextricably fuses these two major components of his art. By giving his characters in the study of manners a humanizing complexity he makes them more than simple conceptual counters and, thus, does not permit the social fable to be a rigidly schematic allegory. This is particularly evident, for example, in De Forest's presentation of Carter. Although he makes Carter unmistakably the representative of the morally corrupt Southern Gentleman, he is deliberately vague about the actual extent of Carter's immorality. This permits him to give emphasis to the charm of Carter's manners, a charm so potent to Lillie. In addition, De Forest takes pains to insist on Carter's professional competence and makes him, because Carter objects to the immorality of politically-inspired appointments of such men as Gazaway, seem far more honourable than the Governor of Barataria.[24] In this way De Forest gives the novel the rich complexity of actual life and also prepares us to exercise charity by demonstrating that an individual must not be judged solely in terms of a known type.

The fact that this initial section of the novel is essentially comic in no way diminishes the effectiveness of De Forest's procedure. The tone and pace of these chapters, to which some critics have objected, is entirely appropriate. In the first place, De Forest's humour succeeds in simultaneously presenting stereotypical Northern manners as they must appear to others and in criticising these manners for their stiffness. Secondly, this humour is far more complex than critics have been willing to admit and makes a definite, although subtle, thematic contribution. The stress on Ravenel's personality as a satiric man points to De Forest's intention that Ravenel's characteristic denunciations of the South be viewed as a satire within the larger satire of the New Boston comedy of manners. Ravenel's attacks on Southern manners reflect the extremity of the Southern myth fashioned by the New England abolitionists. "Abolitionists of the Garrison-Phillips-Theodore Parker stamp," Daniel Aaron writes, "objectified the great sin of the South in the slaveholder and pictured the Cotton Kingdom as one vast brothel ruled by brutal whip-swinging bashaws."[25] Ravenel's speeches, like the one attacking the planters of St. Dominic Parish,[26] similarly make brutality and ignorance the hallmarks of Southern conduct. In one sense, then

Ravenel's satire complements the satire of New Boston because, together, they constitute a criticism of the entire nation. The comedy of manners, in fact, provides a balance for such satiric diatribes because the conduct of the Southerners--Ravenel himself, Lillie, and Carter--demonstrably refutes Ravenel's claims about the extent of Southern barbarism. Similarly, the Northerners do not appear to be nearly as admirable as Ravenel claims. The comedy of manners, with its internal satire of the South, thus serves as a method of puncturing regional myths and, therefore, reinforces De Forest's point about the need to escape the confines of such myths.

Finally, the seemingly "leisurely" pace of these chapters is perfectly suited to the topic. It reflects a time in which the war is not a grim reality but a topic for conversation and argument. These chapters concentrate on the normal rounds of social life because Lillie and Colburne are only lightly touched by the war. As historical events become more intrusive, De Forest changes both the tone and pace to reflect their impact. When these events are again less intensely felt, he resumes the style of the opening.

III

In the last two sections of Miss Ravenel's Conversion De Forest continues to use successfully the procedures of the novelist of manners to develop a social fable which illustrates the need to escape the limitations of provincialism. De Forest, that is, maintains his presentation as "a biography of Miss Ravenel, illustrated by sketches of her three or four relatives and intimates." Like those in the first section, these sketches are brought into "interesting juxtaposition." Here, however, De Forest is not primarily concerned with manners but with underlying moral values. By tracing the way provincial types conduct themselves in similar situations, then, he provides a comparison of the societies which, because they nurtured them, heavily influenced or determined their conduct. These comparisons, thus, are part of De Forest's interpretation of the historical situation. They constitute a devastating attack on the moral character of Southern society and, consequently, express a belief that the South must accept the moral leadership of the North.

De Forest makes the love story the heart of his attack on provincialism. He does this, first, by showing that Lillie and Colburne are separated by their combination of innocence and provincialism and that, as a consequence, Lillie marries Carter. Secondly, he makes this marriage a demonstration of Lillie's blindness to the real nature of Carter's Southern "geographical morality." Thirdly, he traces her growth as, through love and broadening experience, she escapes the confinement of her provincialism. Finally, he presents, through her marriage to Colburne, a model of regional conciliation, a symbol of the true national union which he hopes will emerge from the Civil War.

De Forest retains the humanity in his portraits of Lillie and Colburne by giving them credibility as inexperienced youths. Thus, they are presented as being "similarly innocent and juvenile in their worshipful appreciation of Colonel Carter" (146). Because Colburne is shown to be in awe of Carter's military skill in spite of his distaste for Carter's personal conduct, for example, he is given credibility as a youthfully inexperienced soldier. Similarly, because Lillie is shown to find Carter too "powerfully magnetic" (223) to sense any flaws in him at all, she is plausibly presented as a passionate and romantic girl.

De Forest does not, however, allow this to undermine their value as conceptual agents because he still shows that their typal qualities play a major role in determining their relationship. In a key episode, then, he reveals provincial attitudes to manners actually separating Lillie and Colburne. In this episode, Colburne almost completely destroys his chances of ever winning Lillie when he defends his attendance at a dinner given by some _métis_. True to type as a "New Orleans born Anglo-Saxon girl, full of the pride of lineage and the prejudices of the slaveholding society in which she had been nurtured" (169), Lillie manifests signs of "the brute force of Hengist and Horsa prejudice" (167). Thus, she chastises Colburne for his violation of the Southern code of manners. As a Southerner she is shocked by Colburne's conduct and her "womanly pride" is "exceedingly hurt in that her friendship had been risked for the sake of communion with a race of pariahs" (172). This causes her, then, to lose respect for Colburne. Throughout this episode Colburne remains true to the highest type of the Northern gentleman because he shows himself to be "too chivalrous to be false to his education, to his principles, to himself" (172). He does not, therefore, either deny or condemn his conduct. Ironically, this strong sense of honour benefits his rival for Lillie's hand because it prevents him from defending himself by revealing that Carter has also attended these dinners.

De Forest succeeds in showing that the combined innocence and provincialism of Lillie and Colburne determine their relationship. He displays Colburne as being so naive that he cannot perceive Lillie's passionate nature. Furthermore, he shows that Colburne's difficulty in understanding Lillie is compounded by his Northern habit of emphasizing spiritual qualities. Thus, Colburne is both naive and coldly spiritual in his belief that Lillie cannot be influenced by "any simple carnal impulses, however innocent" (144). De Forest emphasizes that Lillie is indeed "more emotional than reflective" and that, consequently, when the "tropical blood in the Colonel's veins" drives him to propose marriage, she accepts because of "the electric potency of his presence" (223). The geographical phrase, "tropical blood," is reminiscent of the terms used to describe Southern conduct in the New Boston section. It implies that there is a sensual quality in Southern charm which attracts Lillie. Thus, De Forest makes Lillie behave plausibly as Southern belle. Swayed by passion rather than moral reason, she chooses Carter, the "Southern 'high-toned' gentleman," rather than Colburne, the "representative young man of my native New England" (205).

De Forest expands the love story to show that Lillie's decision to marry Carter demonstrates her blindness to both the immoral nature of Southern society and Carter's true character as a Southern gentleman. He does this most effectively by using instances of sexual immorality to indicate the moral flaws in the very foundation of Southern society. Together, the episodes concerned with sexual temptations suggest that if private morality is tainted, the entire social structure which nurtures it may also be corrupt.

The premise that private morality and public morality are interdependent is stated repeatedly by Ravenel. He says, for instance, that "'Saint Paul, Pascal, Wilberforce couldn't have remained respectable if they had remained slaveholding planters'" (93). Ravenel includes Carter among the members of the planter class and distrusts his moral character because he considers his type to be "a natural product of that slaveholding system which he regarded as a compendium of injustice and wickedness" (188). In his opinion there are "brutish forms of vice which flow directly from slavery" to stain those of Carter's class by making them "drunkards, gamblers, adulterers, murderers" (189). Following his basic procedure as a novelist of manners, De Forest dramatizes an essential agreement with Ravenel's exaggerated portrait of the Southerner by displaying the immorality of members of both the lowest and the highest Southern classes.

Major Scott, a freed slave, is used to illustrate the manners and morals of the Negroes under two different social systems. In appearance Scott is "a counterpart of Mrs. Stowe's immortal idealism, Uncle Tom" (246). Because Scott habitually lies and commits adultery, Ravenel realizes that "'Uncle Tom is a pure fiction'" (248). Ravenel also realizes that such moral lapses are the inevitable result of his education as a slave and declares that it is foolish to think that "'a St. Vincent de Paul could be raised under the injustice and dissolutions of the sugar-planting system'" (247). De Forest uses Scott's conduct, then, to shatter the stereotypical slave of the Abolitionists by showing that his treatment within the Southern social system inevitably degraded him morally.

To counter-balance this presentation, De Forest uses Scott to destroy the Southern stereotype of the Negro as a sub-human species by showing how Scott and the other former slaves are morally uplifted when they are part of a more humane social system. De Forest, in fact, inverts the plantation myth by showing that Scott and his fellow former slaves actually love the Ravenels precisely because the Ravenels treat them as humans and try to educate them. The freed slaves, for this reason, not only do not run away but actually work harder and produce more than they ever had as slaves. De Forest shows that Scott is ennobled by his new education to such a degree that he is willing to suffer "martyrdom" (295) defending the freedom Ravenel has taught him to appreciate. De Forest concludes this attack on the Southern slave system by declaring that the anguish of Scott's wife on hearing of his death is sufficient to "cast shame on those philosophers who have asserted that the negro is not a man" (294).

De Forest shows that the same flaws evident in Scott prior to his moral education are found in the Southern upper classes, even those without slaves, by adding to the initial love triangle of Lillie, Carter, and Colburne, the amoral and scheming Mrs. Larue. Through the series of relationships which are thus developed, he illustrates and compares the moral attitudes of Northerners and Southerners.

Just as he gives humanizing complexity to the types introduced in the New Boston section, De Forest gives Mrs. Larue traits which make her unique but do not destroy her typal qualities. Thus, while Lillie sees in Mrs. Larue's dark beauty "'a true type of Louisiana'" (45), the narrator refuses to present her as typical in every regard. He says of her, "On the principle of justice to Satan, I must say that she was no fair sample of the proud and stiff-necked slaveholding aristocracy of Louisiana" (130). The back-handed nature of this apology for the slaveholders is probably due to the fact that De Forest presents Mrs. Larue's attitudes as atypical primarily in the political sphere for, unlike the fanatical Secessionists, her only political concern is to have influential friends on the winning side.

De Forest portrays Mrs. Larue as being quite different from Lillie whose personal virtue has not yet been corrupted by the Southern social environment. He does show, however, that as Southerners they share traits of temperament because both are more concerned with the sensual than the moral qualities of men. While Lillie is attracted by Carter's "magnetism," Madame Larue is attracted to men in general. De Forest presents the latter, however, as "veteran worldling" (161) who is capable of assessing men for what they are and of altering her manner accordingly to create the best impression.

De Forest's depiction of Mrs. Larue's manners indicates that she has none of Lillie's innocence and none of her simple honesty. He shows that she acts instinctively and artfully in constantly changing the "chameleon's jacket" of her manners to suit her surroundings:

> It was interesting to see what a nun-like and saintly

> pose she could take in the presence of a clergyman. To the Colonel she acted the part of Lady Gay Spanker; to the Doctor she was femme raisonnable, and, so far as she could be, femme savante; to Colburne she of late generally played the female Platonic philosopher (207).

He illustrates these poses with scenes which together show that it is precisely the lack of consistent and genuine manners which characterizes her behaviour. In many ways, however, he also presents Mrs. Larue as the female equivalent of Carter's class, the "men-about-town." Thus, Mrs. Larue is presented as typically Southern because her manners make her a "pattern of amiability" (369). The hypocrisy manifest in her adaptable manners, though, is merely one sign that her "corruption" is "lillied over with decorum and smiling amiability" (371). This corruption, which lends support to Ravenel's repeated insistence that "'The polish of the South is superficial and semi-barbarous'" (471), is displayed especially well by Mrs. Larue's conduct with Carter.

De Forest places Colburne and Mrs. Larue in the similar position of being attracted to a married person. The narrator insists that Colburne "certainly was loving another man's wife with perfect innocence" (295), a statement supported by Colburne's self-sacrifice in constantly praising Lillie's husband in her presence. Innocent and chaste in his devotion, Colburne represents the Northern moral system. In contrast, Mrs. Larue represents the decadent European attitude toward the sanctity of marriage: "He was the child of Puritanism and she of Balzac's moral philosophy" (384). Thus, aboard the symbolically named ship, *Creole*, she mouths sentiments about the "*divin sens du genésique*" and "*la sainte passion de l'amour*," which she herself does not believe, in order to tempt Carter into infidelity.

Mrs. Larue's French "sentimental sophistry" (350), which argues for exceptions even in moral rules, does not really deceive Carter's "Anglo-Saxon conscience" (350). Nevertheless, he succumbs, De Forest shows, because his will is weak, his moral perceptions are imperfect, and his passions are influenced by his Southern habit of heavy drinking. Carter abandons his attempt to row against the tide of passion and gives himself to Mrs. Larue who is eager to "take the helm and guide him down the current of his own emotions" (351). De Forest's navigational imagery suggests that he regards Carter's lapse as an abandonment of personal responsibility for his moral fate, a surrender of both will and moral reason.

Carter's attitudes towards moral problems are just as significant to De Forest's point about the corruption underlying Southern society as Carter's actual fall is. De Forest, in fact, clearly indicates previous to this episode that Carter displays a Southern moral attitude even when his acts themselves cannot be regarded as those typical of Southerners. Thus, even though Carter's swindling of the government in the ship-burning scheme cannot be in the least taken as a sign of Southern financial corruption, Carter's attitude towards it does reflect Southern moral principles. Carter regrets this swindle as "'The only ungentlemanly act of my life!'" (396). De Forest insists that such moral blindness reveals Carter to be the product of a peculiar social code:

> many people of high social position hold a similarly mixed moral creed; they allow that a gentleman may be given to expensive immoralities, but not to money-getting ones; that he may indulge in wine, women, and play, but not in swindling. All over Europe this curious ethical distinction prevails and very naturally, for it springs out of the conditions of a hereditary aristocracy and makes allowance for the vices to which aristocracy and makes allowance for the vices to which wealthy nobles are tempted, but not for vices to which they are not tempted. A feeble echo of it has traversed the ocean and influenced some characters in America both for good and for evil (396-97).

Carter again displays the "mixed moral creed" of the aristocratic South after his adultery. While he does feel some regret for deceiving Lillie, he actually rationalizes his conduct by bringing it within the bounds of acceptable aristocratic behaviour: "He honestly thought that most men would have done as he did; that no one but a religious fanatic would have resisted so much temptation; and that such resistance would have been altogether ungentlemanly" (366). The irony here, of course, is that Carter's gentlemanly behaviour does not differ substantially from that of the former slave, Major Scott. De Forest thus uses the conduct of both to reveal the moral laxity permeating the Southern social system.

De Forest insists on this laxity as a Southern trait by setting up a contrast between Carter's behaviour and Colburne's. Thus, Colburne, when tempted by Mrs. Larue, does not fall. To Carter, Colburne's unwillingness to "'amuse himself'" with Mrs. Larue makes Colburne a "'curiosity'" (167). Colburne, however, is shown to be aware of the amorality which makes Mrs. Larue "as malicious as Mephistopheles" (351) in pursuing her conquest of Carter. De Forest, in fact, presents Mrs. Larue's second attempt to conquer Colburne in terms of Satan's temptation of Christ:

> He was taken by gentle force up the intricate paths of a mountain of talk, and shown the unsubstantial and turbulent kingdoms of coquetry with a hint that all might be his if he would but fall down and worship. It became a question in his mind whether Milton should not have represented Satan as a female of French extraction and New Orleans education (203).

De Forest's comparisons of Northerners and Southerners within the love story supports the narrator's belief that the "representative young man of my native New England" would be "a better match for Miss Ravenel than this Southern 'high-toned' gentleman whom she insists upon having" (205). It also contributes to the social fable, because it shows that Lillie's provincialism does make her blind to the moral nature of the South. Because this comparison shows that Lillie's decision to marry Carter leads to unhappiness which could have been avoided with a better choice of husband, it also indicates her need to escape the typal confinement which is ruining her life.

This comparison of Northern and Southern conduct in the love story also contributes to the social fable as a biography of the nation. Symbolically, Lillie's marriage to Carter represents the South's acceptance of a superficially appealing, but essentially retrograde and corrupt, system instead of the austere but moral social order of the North. The association of Mrs. Larue with Satan and Mephistopheles extends this symbolic interpretation. It links Carter's fall with the religious terms used in the novel to characterize the military conflict as what James F. Light correctly sees as a "Holy War for Christianity and Democracy."[27] Carter's conduct represents a moral upheaval of domestic order, just as the Secession of the South represents an upheaval of political order. His death, which paves the way for the marriage of Lillie and Colburne, therefore, can be seen as something more than a product of plot imperatives imposed by a sentimental audience. De Forest's interpretation of events requires Carter's death. Throughout the novel, Ravenel characterizes the South as an "'obstacle to the progress of humanity'" (50). In spite of his rhetorical excesses, Ravenel is generally an authorial spokesman for, as James W. Gargano has proven, his teleological interpretation of the Civil War as a contest between progress and barbarism forms a significant theme of the novel.[28] Because Carter is a type of the ante-bellum Southern gentleman, he is, as Gargano notes, "a barbarous feudal relic" who does not advance God's evolutionary plans. Carter must die, then, because "the world has no need for him."[29]

Although this symbolic interpretation of Carter's death sounds harsh, it represents De Forest's attitude toward Carter only as a conceptual agent in the social fable. De Forest successfully invests Carter with humanity and does have compassion for him as an individual. De Forest does not, for instance, condemn the mortally-wounded Carter for his rejection of all thoughts of Christ, an action which must have made Carter seem, at best, shockingly irreverent to the religious readers of the day. Instead of interpreting this rejection outright, De Forest offers three plausible explanations, each of which mitigates the irreverence: "Perhaps he thought it unworthy of him to seek God in his extremity, when he had neglected Him in all his hours of health. Perhaps he felt that he owed his last thoughts to his country and his professional duties. Perhaps he did not mean all that he said" (425). More importantly, De Forest presents Carter as a victim of his society: "With another education Carter might have been a James Brainard or a St. Vincent de Paul. With the training that he had, it was perfectly logical that in his last moments he should not want to be bothered about Jesus Christ" (425). The statement here reminds us of Ravenel's claim that he should not have expected Major Scott to be a St. Vincent de Paul because he was "'raised under the injustice and dissoluteness of the sugar-planting system'" (247). De Forest's treatment of Carter as an individual does not, then, detract from his criticism of the South. Rather, it contributes to it by making the death scene one of the most damning indictments of Southern provincialism. This scene, that is, argues that the Southern system made atheists of its potential saints.

De Forest uses the "interesting juxtaposition" of Northern and Southern conduct, which indicates the superiority of the Northern moral character, to show that Lillie's blindness to the true character of Carter and the South leads to personal unhappiness when her marriage is violated by Carter's adultery. He establishes, then, the need for her to escape her provincial limitations, an escape De Forest dramatizes through Lillie's "conversion" from Secession to Loyalty.

Although De Forest presents this conversion as a process in which Lillie develops from a type of the passionate Southern provincial to a model of a responsible partner in national unity, he does not make this social fable a mechanical propoganda allegory. De Forest illustrates his ideas without being false to the integrity of his characters as individual human beings. Thus, the need for Lillie to convert politically is made part of her need to gain maturity, a need embodied in Ravenel's demand that "'You positively must cease to be a child and become a woman'" (227).

Because De Forest does not endow her with exceptional beauty, intelligence, or courage as an individual, Lillie is, as Howells complained, somewhat of an "inconsequent woman."[30] Furthermore, Lillie is converted through feelings rather than intellect. While this does not give her nobility, it maintains her plausibility because it is in accord with the view of women which De Forest presents in the novel. The fullest statements of this view occur in De Forest's comments on Lillie's labour when he observes that "Woman is more intimately and irresponsibly a child of Nature than man. . . . She is both lower and higher than man by instinct rather than by reason, from necessity rather than from choice" (372). Later he asserts about woman that the "strongest part of her nature" is "her sentiments" (464). De Forest also says that Lillie "felt (not thought) that love was the teacher of the soul" (330). Thus, De Forest insists that because she is a woman Lillie can be converted only through love and, therefore, makes the process of conversion an integral part of Lillie's love story.

De Forest presents Lillie's conversion as a series of stages in which her love for her father, Carter, Ravvie, and finally, Colburne, combined with enlarging experience, causes her to abandon her provincial assumptions. In the first stage her attitude towards the customary violence of the South is radically altered. In the New Boston section of the novel, she was presented as a Southerner temperamentally because, "after the fashion of most Southern women, she believed in fighting, and respected a man the more for drawing the sword, no matter for which party" (80). Upon her return to New Orleans, however, her respect for violence is undermined by the assault on her father. Her belief in Southern civility is also weakened when the Langdons ostracize her because of her father's political beliefs. Together, these incidents educate her to the falsity of her girlish assumptions about the South and mark the beginning of her development towards womanhood and Loyalty.

De Forest presents the next stage, Lillie's political conversion, as a product of her experience and her love for Carter. De Forest, that is, shows that Lillie, having already recognized the absurdity of romanticizing the Southern penchant for violence because she senses that it can cause genuine domestic tragedies, wishes for Carter's safety so much that she identifies herself with his cause. This political conversion is, of course, gradual rather than immediate. As her romance with Carter becomes more serious, she first becomes a Federalist, "for she was not yet so established in the faith as to style it Loyalist or Patriot" (182). By the time of her engagement she feels that the Northern troops are "our side" (195). After her marriage she becomes a "firm Loyalist" (229), but not an Abolitionist. Her love and her new craving for peace thus make her only a political and not a moral convert. This is signalled by the fact that Lillie treats Carter, whom she loves "a hundred times as much as she did her country" (397), almost as a "deity" (225). Lillie is, therefore, willing to instruct the plantation Negroes for his sake because she has not yet matured enough in faith to learn "to do it for Jesus Christ's sake" (239).

De Forest emphasizes that the conversion prompted by love for Carter is not complete because he makes politics and religion inseparable throughout the novel. Ravenel, for instance, constantly talks of Southerner worshipping slavery, "'the divinity of Ashantee'" (52). They have, he declares, made a "'compact with the devil'" (286) and have become "'the most orthodox creatures that ever served the devil'" (286). Colburne assents to the Doctor's characterization and remarks that the sight of the South makes him feel that "'this is where Satan's seat is'" (112). De Forest appears to be in essential agreement with these views because, in reporting the death of Major Scott, he heavy-handedly allies the North with God and the South with Satan: "The last prayer of the negro was, 'My God!' and the last curse of the Rebel was 'Damnation!'" (292).

De Forest indicates, then, that Lillie's conversion cannot be completed until her religious feelings are in accord with her new political beliefs. He presents this process as beginning after the birth of her child, Ravvie, who gives her new religious inspiration. When Carter betrays Lillie and then is killed, De Forest presents the conclusion of the process. Lillie has "walked through a valley of humiliation" (476) and has lost her Southern "barbarian beliefs" (156). She is now prepared, because of her suffering, to accept Colburne, "The man whom she ought always to have loved" (479), an act which symbolically indicates that the South, because of the carnage of war, would be willing to accept union with the North. Lillie's own view of herself, in fact, suggests this interpretation with almost Hawthornesque symbolism:

> she seemed with amazement to see herself in double: the one figure widowed and weeping, seated amid the tombs of perished hopes; the other also widowed in garb, but about to put on bridal white, and with a face which lit up the darkness (480).[31]

De Forest indicates the moral dimension of Lillie's love for Colburne through her thought, "'I am right in loving him'" (480). Having previously been wrong in giving sway to her Southern sensuality by marrying Carter, then, she now expresses a mature love which underlines her change from a willful girl who had wanted to convert others to an anachronistic creed to a woman "willing at all times now to make confession of her conversion" (480). Her decision to live "'Always at the North!'" (480) is one such confession and indicates her complete escape from the confinement of Southern provincialism. She now realizes that Ravvie can be made more like Dr. Ravenel and less like Carter if he is raised in the moral North. Ravvie, who embodies the future for her, unites her in hope with the Northern Colburne: "'He is yours--mine--ours'" (479).

De Forest establishes this marriage even more firmly as a model of regional reconciliation by offering the same interpretation of Colburne's love as of the result of the Civil War: "The nation was not more certainly guided by the hand of Providence in overthrowing slavery than was this man in loving this woman" (462). This marriage, then, reasserts domestic harmony and morality just as the union of the warring sections reasserts political harmony and progressive Christian morality. De Forest presents this desired result as arising not only because the North has fought on the side of heaven, but also because the North has matured and escaped its own provincialism. Thus, he presents Colburne as a man strengthened in character because his sufferings have "taken down his false pride" (484). No longer confined by his provincial "Yankeehood," Colburne accepts the mantle of social responsibility as the head of a family as composite in make-up as Ravenel's character. For this reason, he is no longer simply a type of the Northerner. Instead, he is the embodiment of the new American character. "Like the nation," De Forest declares, "he has developed and learned his powers" (484). This inspires De Forest with optimism: "It is in millions of such men that the strength of the Republic consists" (485).

De Forest's social fable, then, has its foundation in the New Boston comedy of manners. The provincial types established there remain the objects of criticism because they are employed in the social fable's narrative vehicle, the love story. This story, in turn, dramatizes their escape, through love and enlarging experience, from typal confinement and their consequent reconciliation in a marriage which indicates the union of Southern personality and manners with Northern character and morals. At the same time, this story follows the pattern of historic events and has symbolic overtones. Thus, Lillie's marriage to Carter symbolizes the South's acceptance of a corrupt order. Her marriage to Colburne, which comes about because both have been chastened by the war, symbolizes the new national union which is formed by the South's acceptance of Northern moral leadership.

In spite of its attack on provincialism and its noble vision of a new national unity, Miss Ravenel's Conversion would have mouldered as merely a piece of out-moded propoganda if the social fable had not been so intensely alive as a novel of manners. Although Miss Ravenel's Conversion is clearly a social fable with symbolic overtones, that is, it remains just as clearly and just as vitally the biography of an individual and her acquaintances. The novel succeeds because De Forest, in sketching the characters and in bringing them into "interesting juxtaposition," never falsifies life to keep the characters within the bounds of their roles as conceptual agents. This is particularly true of De Forest's treatment of his two "villains," Colonel Carter and Mrs. Larue. He invests them with such full and complex humanity that neither is a moral puppet twitching to illustrate the author's contentions about Southern corruption. De Forest thus gives Carter some virtues and some deep, tender feelings. He is even willing to present Carter as the moral superior of the Governor of Barataria who, although upright in his private conduct, lets political expediency and nepotism influence his conduct of the Holy War. Similarly, De Forest presents Mrs. Larue as a charming person in spite of her corruption and permits this "amiable sinner" (428) to display goodness by secretly renting Ravenel's house for him. What is more, De Forest does not have her punished for her corruption. He actually permits her to make a fortune in illegal speculations and to go North to live happily. In making her, as Gordon Haight says, "the first profligate woman to escape retribution in an American novel,"[32] De Forest was exceptionally courageous. He not only was far in advance of his age by refusing to make his sense of life fit the accepted conventions of morality in fiction,[33] but he also asserted his vision of life in a novel which portrays the restoration of divinely sanctioned domestic and political morality.

De Forest's presentation of his characters as individuals illustrating Lillie's biography does, then, include the display of traits which are not necessary to their functions as agents in the social fable. This does not, however, negate their value as agents. Such traits as they do display are elements of a personality we can accept as plausible and as having some relationship to the character's background. Nevertheless, the very complexity of the characters as individuals compared to their relative simplicity as agents in the fable does make a demand on the reader. De Forest requires us to be like Lillie and Colburne by exercising charity because his method demands that the generalizations employed about conceptual agents in the social fable be qualified if one is to arrive at the complete truth about individuals in the biography.

Because De Forest was able to give his social fable life through the procedures of the novel of manners, Miss Ravenel's Conversion is a successful novel. His skill in bringing it to life is so great, I think, that at least two of the characters, Carter and Mrs. Larue, escape the confines of the book to take on lasting life in our imaginations. This is a skill which makes Miss Ravenel's Conversion one of the finest American novels of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Few other American novels have been able to communicate the sense of life of this panoramic novel and to criticize so thoroughly the manners and morals of an entire nation. Miss Ravenel's Conversion not only preserves the shape of American life, it interprets it with a depth of understanding that cannot be found in any other novel about this period. The scope, the clarity, the life, the meaningful complexity of Miss Ravenel's Conversion are proof that, as Howells declared, De Forest should be "lastingly recognized as one of the masters of American fiction."[34]

Notes

[1] Robert A. Lively, Fiction Fights the Civil War (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1957), p. 46.

[2] [William Dean Howells,] "Reviews and Literary Notices," rev. of Miss Ravenel's Conversion, Atlantic Monthly, 20 (July 1867), 121.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Alexander Cowie, The Rise of the American Novel (New York: American Book Co., 1948), p. 508.

[5] David M. Potter, "De Forest," Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society, 10 (1951), 197-98.

[6] Gordon S. Haight, ed., Miss Ravenel's Conversion (New York: Rinehart, 1955), p. xvi.

[7] Gordon S. Haight, "Realism Defined: William Dean Howells," Literary History of the United States: History, ed. Robert E. Spiller et al., 3rd ed., rev. (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 882.

[8] Albert E. Stone, Jr., "Reading, Writing, and History: Best Novel of the Civil War," American Heritage, 13 (June 1962), 84.

[9] Miss Ravenel's Conversion, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New York: Rinehart, 1955), p. 200. Page numbers for further quotations from this edition will be cited in parentheses. Frank Bergmann, The Worthy Gentleman of Democracy (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitatsverlag, 1971), p. 47, quotes this same passage to make a similar point.

[10] James W. Gargano, "A Thematic Analysis of Miss Ravenel's Conversion," Topic, 1 (Fall, 1961), 41-42, makes a similar point.

[11] Jay Martin, Harvests of Change (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 34.

[12] "The Great American Novel," The Nation, 6 (9 Jan. 1868), 29.

[13] Lively, p. 57.

[14] Gargano, "A Thematic Analysis of Miss Ravenel's Conversion," 44, makes a similar point about Carter: "He is retrograde in his private life as the South is in the nation. . . ."

[15] James W. Gargano, "John W. De Forest: A Critical Study of His Novels," Diss. Cornell 1955, pp. 128-29.

[16] Ibid., p. 129. Apparently Gargano no longer holds the opinion that De Forest is a "good satirist." In his published version of his study, "A Thematic Analysis of *Miss Ravenel's Conversion*," 44, he says, "In the first four chapters of the novel, the narrator seems hilariously bent on discrediting New Boston with all the resources of sophomoric wit."

[17] *The Illusion of Life* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1969), p. 139.

[18] Potter, 197-98.

[19] "Miss Ravenel's Conversion," rev., *The Nation*, 4 (20 June 1867), 491.

[20] "Mr. De Forest's Novels," *Atlantic Monthly*, 33 (Nov. 1873), 615.

[21] Lively, pp. 55-56.

[22] Gargano, "A Thematic Analysis of *Miss Ravenel's Conversion*," 43-44.

[23] Cowie, p. 507.

[24] Describing Carter's second meeting with the Governor, De Forest says, "In one respect, Carter had the highest moral standpoint. He did wrong to please himself, but it was under the pressure of overwhelming impulse, and he paid for it in frank remorse. The other did wrong after calm deliberation, sadly regretting the alleged necessity, but chloroforming his conscience with the plea of necessity" (360).

[25] *The Unwritten War* (New York: Knopf, 1973), p. 7.

[26] See *Miss Ravenel's Conversion*, p. 49.

[27] *John William De Forest*, Twayne's United States Authors Series, 82 (New York: Twayne, 1965), p. 98.

[28] "A Thematic Analysis of *Miss Ravenel's Conversion*," 43-44.

[29] Ibid., 45.

[30] "Reviews and Literary Notices," rev. of *Miss Ravenel's Conversion*, *Atlantic Monthly*, 20 (July 1867), 122.

[31] De Forest later used a marriage ceremony in The Bloody Chasm but had characters make direct statements about the symbolic value of the ceremony.

[32] Haight, LHUS, p. 882.

[33] Twenty years after the publication of Miss Ravenel's Conversion, Howells, "Editor's Study," Harper's, 74 (April 1887), 825, could still say, "Then the whole spawn of so-called un-moral romances, which imagine a world where the sins of the sense are unvisited by the penalties following, swift or slow, but inexorably sure, in the real world, are deadly poison: these do kill." It is little wonder that Howells later declared, in Heroines of Fiction (New York and London: Harper's, 1901), II, 157, that he could not think of Mrs. Larue "without shuddering."

[34] Howells, Heroines of Fiction, II, 162.

CHAPTER V

THE ANATOMY OF SOUTHERN BARBARISM: KATE BEAUMONT

As one of its characters, Major Lawson, notes repeatedly, De Forest's fifth novel, Kate Beaumont (1872), is a Romeo and Juliet love story set in ante-bellum South Carolina. De Forest's lovers, Frank McAlister and Kate Beaumont, are, like Romeo and Juliet, members of feuding families. They meet and fall in love on board a ship returning them, after long absences, to America. Because the lovers have been educated in Europe, they have lost what Kate calls "'the home ideas.'"[1] Both lovers, that is, no longer accept the customs and conventions which give sanction to the feud between their families. When they reach their homes, however, they find that these customs and conventions, particularly the imperatives of the code duello, have precedence over their rights and beliefs as individuals. Thus, the provincial code, which endures by means of the hatreds it generates, leads to fresh erruptions of the feud and threatens the happiness of the lovers by preventing their marriage. De Forest's lovers do not, however, suffer the tragic fate of Shakespeare's. Eventually they end the feud and establish a model and potential centre of social harmony through their marriage.

The love story in Kate Beaumont thus fits Jay Martin's description of De Forest's "basic pattern" because it provides a "structure of conflict" and the conflict culminates in the reconciliation of diversities.[2] In other words, the love story in Kate Beaumont is used to create a social fable for, as James Gargano says, "the structure of the novel is obviously designed to emphasize a moral aim."[3] Like Witching Times and Miss Ravenel's Conversion, Kate Beaumont attacks provincialism.[4] The social fable illustrates the superiority of love and progressive ideas over the hatreds generated by an anachronistic and provincial code.[5]

Since this social fable is intended to illustrate the limitations of a provincial code of manners, it depends absolutely upon a depiction of those manners. De Forest, therefore, presents a portrait of Southern society in which he emphasizes the conduct of the aristocrats, the chief proponents of the code. Much of this presentation succeeds in conveying what Lionel Trilling sees as the essence of manners, "a culture's hum and buzz of implication."[6] In this case, De Forest presents the "hum and buzz" as that of a society which is so anachronistic that he is able to characterize it as barbaric. His presentation of manners thus contributes to an essential point of the fable because it reveals Southern conduct to be not only provincial, but also inappropriate to the claims of high civilization.

De Forest was pleased with Kate Beaumont and told Edwin Oviatt that it was "'about the best thing I ever did.'"[7] Clara F. McIntyre agrees with this estimate of De Forest's career by declaring that Kate Beaumont "is on the whole the high water mark of De Forest's writing."[8] Both, I believe, are wrong. The portrayal of manners is often first-rate and the novel is obviously designed as a social fable, but Kate Beaumont is not a completely successful work. Its weakness is attributable primarily to De Forest's handling of the love story. The love story's conventionality, particularly of characterization, prevents the novel of manners from giving life to the major conceptual agents in the social fable. Kate, with her pale purity, and Frank, with his equally insipid goodness, are shackled to their roles as virtuous young lovers. They never really escape to provide any effective contrast to the provincial types. Furthermore, the love story at times exists more for itself than as a means for illustrating the theme. For example, Mrs. Chester's mad attempt to win Frank seems, as Gargano says, "to constitute an almost independent story that blurs the structure of the book."[9] The social fable, which depends upon the love story, does not, then, provide a completely satisfactory thematic shape for the depiction of manners. In Kate Beaumont, therefore, the novel of manners and the social fable do not complement each other as they do in Miss Ravenel's Conversion.

In my analysis of Kate Beaumont I will first demonstrate that De Forest employs the love story as the narrative base of a social fable which traces the victory of love and order over the hate and chaos promoted by provincialism. I will then show that De Forest proceeds with the social fable by means of the display and criticism of manners. I will show, that is, that he proceeds by contrasting progressive types with provincial types, by satirizing conduct based on the provincial code, and by using animal and feudal images when describing representative Southerners and their typical conduct, in order to condemn Southern provincialism. Finally, I will show that De Forest's treatment of the love story is the flaw in an otherwise successful work of fiction.

The opening section of Kate Beaumont is set on board the Mersey, a ship returning a group of South Carolinians to their homes. The Southerners on board constitute an incomplete but significant microcosm of shore society. De Forest does not portray either negroes or crackers, but he does describe the behaviour of Southern aristocrats and those with whom they come into contact in order to indicate the most important conventions governing Southern society and to give the passengers value as conceptual agents. This permits him to establish the love story as the narrative foundation of his social fable. De Forest, that is, sets up the conflict between progress and provincialism by presenting the love between Frank and Kate as one which violates Southern social conventions.

Kate's brother Tom and her aunt, Mrs. Chester, are presented as types of the Southern aristocracy. Both, like their relatives on shore, are quick-tempered. Mrs. Chester, for example, displays her "peppery dignity" (59) when she insists that Tom avoid even mild profanity in her presence. He, in turn, is offended by her insinuation that his vocabulary deprives him of the title, "gentleman." Her reaction shows her complete subservience to the South's chivalric code for she gravely instructs him always to "'repel that insinuation, from whomsoever it comes'" (59). Both, then, typify the extreme devotion of Southerners to the concept of personal and family honour. Mrs. Chester, in fact, regards the maintenance of this honour as essential to social status for she is as proud of the long feud between the Beaumonts and McAlisters as of "a family heirloom, unmistakably aristocratic" (78).

Frank McAlister affords a notable contrast to these two Southern provincials. Although he comes from "an impulsive race" (65), he has repressed his impulses in order to train himself in the practical pursuit of mineralogy. This dedication and self-control contrast with the "devil-may-care" (57) conduct of Tom whose only pursuits are drinking and talking about horses. Frank's European education has also made him impatient of American and Southern chauvinism. He insists, when Mrs. Chester objects to one of his statements as an attack on their native land, that his criticism is not an attack but an exercise of duty: "'How can we mend our imperfections so long as we persuade each other that we are already perfect?'" (57). His most forceful sallies against provincial vanity, however, are those which express his disgust at the code of honour governing the conduct of what Mrs. Chester delights in calling "'our untitled nobility'" (56): "'It is a point of family honor, I know; it seems to be held a duty to keep up the feud. But I have learned other ideas. The quarrel appears to me--I beg you will excuse my frankness--simply barbarous. I have no more sympathy with it than I have with a scalp-hunt'" (69). This, the first expression of a recurring analogy between primitive, barbaric, or feudal acts and those of aristocratic Southerners, establishes the novel's moral attitude toward the provincialism made manifest by the code duello. This declaration also identifies Frank as the proponent of progressive and humane conduct.

De Forest quite clearly intends Frank to be regarded as an exemplary gentleman who is significantly superior to the "high-toned" type Tom represents. Thus he repeatedly describes Frank as a giant and a Titan and declares that Frank has "nothing petty about his soul any more than about his physique" (72). He also describes him as a "sagacious youth" (66) who possesses the "dignity natural to giants" (48) and who is always a "gentleman sensitively a gentleman" (68) or a "gentleman, a kind-hearted gentleman" (72). Frank's Christian name, in fact, suggests his honest character: he is described as having "a frank and resolute character" (56) and as being "gentle, sincere, frank almost to bluntness" (74). This function as exemplary gentleman is made even clearer because he is, as Frank Bergmann notes, "The Washington of men" and "is compared to the American gentleman throughout the book."[10]

Until Frank, who has been mistakenly identified as Mr. McMaster, is recognized as a McAlister, Mrs. Chester regards him as worthy not only of bestowing his love on Kate, but of what she conceives as the even higher honour of becoming her own suitor. Frank and Kate are thus able to grow closer together and to form the resolution to end the feud. Once Mrs. Chester discovers his identity, however, her implacable hatred is directed at him simply because of his lineage and the two lovers are no longer able to meet. The situation even becomes dangerous for Frank. Tom feels that Frank has insulted the Beaumonts by having contact with them and, true to his breeding as a "high-toned" Southerner, wants a duel. De Forest thus establishes the basic conflict of the social fable. On one side are the lovers who symbolize the social concord which progressive ideas can initiate. On the other are Mrs. Chester and Tom, the representatives of the Beaumont family. Their irrational hatreds, which cause suffering by forcing the lovers to separate, typify the disruptive force of the provincial code.

In their efforts to end the feud, Frank and Kate are representatives not only of a cosmopolitan view but also of the true Christian spirit. Within the social fable, then, they function as the representatives of divine order who oppose the perversity and the chaos of a pagan code. De Forest stresses the idea of the perversity of the Southern code by constantly presenting the feud as a false religion. Thus, he describes the Beaumont and McAlister houses as being possessed by "the demon of duels" (153). This demon is so venerated that Poinsett laughingly calls the feud "'the Beaumont established religion'" (135). In so doing, he also raises a serious question. Torn by the claims of Frank's honourable and gallant act in rescuing Kate from the burning Mersey, he asks the question central to the novel's plot "'Are we to drop away from the creed of our forefathers?'" (136).

Other speakers also point to the feud as a false religion. Major Lawson characterizes it as "Moloch" (109) to whom valuable lives are sacrificed. The elderly slave, Miriam, expresses this idea even more forcefully. Because she is a slave, chivalric ideas have not clouded her common sense and she has a clearer perception of the true moral nature of affairs than do her white masters. Informing Mrs. Chester of the impending duel between Vincent Beaumont and Wallace McAlister, she says:

> 'But about this duelling. It's Satan's works, as I'se sayin' ever sence the Lord had mercy on me, though you don't think so. You has white folkses notions, all for fightin' an' shootin'. It's Satan's works, an' I've prayed agin it; prayed many a time there might never be

> another duel in this fam'ly; prayed for this poor bloodstained fam'ly, all covered with blood an' wounds; duels on duels an' allays duels, ever sence I can 'member; never heard of no sech folks for it. But 'pears like Satan's got the upper hand of my prayers, an' here's Mars Vincent led away by him, prehaps to his own destruction' (138).

The social fable here, then, is a variation on that in Miss Ravenel's Conversion. In that novel, the mutual charity of Lillie and Colburne leads to Lillie's conversion from Secession, a belief characterized as that of Satan's followers. In Kate Beaumont the mutual charity of the lovers gradually touches their families who abandon the feud, the work of Satan, and themselves practise true Christian charity by doing so. In moral terms the conflict in each novel is the same. Dr. Ravenel takes that large view of the Civil War as an example of "'Heaven fighting with Hell.'"[11] The narrator of Kate Beaumont presents the efforts to restore peace as a contest between "the paradise" of love and "the inferno" of hatreds aroused by duelling (131).

Throughout the novel, then, De Forest's social fable is based on the "sharp conflict" which Gargano has described: "a set of rules which is designed to settle gentlemanly quarrels and which breeds hate and social divisions is confronted by a love which can create social harmony and produce great happiness."[12] In tracing this conflict De Forest follows, as Gargano again realizes, "a clear if somewhat mechanical pattern."[13] De Forest, that is, presents the peace which the devotion of Frank and Kate creates as being repeatedly shattered by a fresh and irrational outbreak of the feud. During each erruption of violence Frank and Kate become increasingly devoted to the idea of peace because they become more devoted to each other. Finally, their love triumphs and they are united in a marriage which assures that their families will maintain the new rule of social harmony. This triumph of "the paradise" in the social fable thus asserts that love is more powerful than hate and that social order flows from charity. It represents an end to what Ravenel called "'geographical morality.'" The Beaumonts and McAlisters, that is, cease to be moral provincials because they abandon the creed of their forefathers, their Southern chivalric code.

The schematic alternation between peace and violence proceeds by means of what is at times a very fine display of ante-bellum manners. As a novel of manners Kate Beaumont does, in fact, have its own design which complements that of the social fable. Kate Beaumont, thus, is not only an adaptation of Romeo and Juliet but also a variation on Cooper's two related "Home" novels, Homeward Bound and Home As Found (1838). Like the first of the Home novels, the Mersey section of Kate Beaumont portrays travellers who are returning to America and contrasts the provincial attitude of those who have been absent a short time with the cosmopolitan attitude of those who have been away longer.[14] It also contains a touch of Cooper's habitual adventure paraphernalia in Frank's mistaken identity and in the harrowing dangers of the Mersey's sinking. In De Forest's hands, however, these are entirely functional. Frank's mistaken identity is necessary as a plot device to make a meeting between the rival families probable and as a method of showing how feelings of family honour cause a change in opinion when a charming stranger is discovered to be a member of an enemy family. The ship's sinking establishes Frank's bravery and thus dramatizes the fact that his opposition to the feud is based on moral considerations and is not the result of cowardice. The sinking also prepares for a major moral problem which the Beaumonts debate, the question as to whether a debt of gratitude has preeminence over outraged honour. De Forest shows restraint in presenting the ship-board scenes and adventures because he does not, as Cooper did, let his novel become "'all ship.'"[15]

The rest of Kate Beaumont resembles Cooper's second Home novel, Home As Found, in that De Forest follows a portion of his ship's company as it reacquaints itself with the conventions of home life. Like Cooper's Home novels, then, the two parts of Kate Beaumont can be seen as constituting a novel of manners which deals with Cooper's stated theme that "The governing social evil in America is provincialism."[16] The main variation on Cooper's novels is that De Forest treats a young couple who have been altered for the better by foreign experiences and who return to a home society which is static and anachronistic, while Cooper traces the return to America of model gentlemen who discover that their society has changed for the worse because of democratic excesses. As the first important and extensive novels of American manners, Cooper's Home novels provide an historical precedent for De Forest's attack on the moral and social limitations of provincialism in Kate Beaumont. The resemblance of Kate Beaumont to these novels suggests that De Forest was the heir of Cooper and was continuing a tradition which combines the depiction of manners for purposes of social criticism with popular fictional elements to make the medicine palatable.[17]

An outstanding feature of De Forest's presentation of ante-bellum manners is his portraits of the Southern aristocrats. De Forest undoubtedly created these to fill what he considered to be a void in American literature. In "Chivalrous and Semi-Chivalrous Southrons" (1869), one of the Reconstruction essays he later revised for inclusion in the second volume of his memoirs, De Forest had complained that there had not yet been in fiction an authentic portrait of the South's chief representative, the aristocratic planter:

> The chivalrous Southron has been too positively and authoritatively a political power to get fair treatment in literature. People have not described him; they have preached for him or preached against him. Northern pens have not done justice to his virtues nor Southern pens to his vices.[18]

He felt that Southern life afforded the novelist abundant material to fulfill the classical duties of the author, to teach and to delight, but he also felt that the task had to be undertaken soon:

> Let us pray that a true Southern novelist may arise, for he will be able to furnish us vast amusement and some instruction. His day is passing; in another generation his material will be gone; the 'chivalrous Southron' will be as dead as the slavery that created him.[19]

He was unwilling to wait for a native Southerner to respond to his prayer. Especially with his portrait of Peyton Beaumont, he himself became in Kate Beaumont the ethnographer who would preserve this vanishing type.

Peyton Beaumont, the novel's most fully realized and fascinating character, embodies nearly all of the contradictory qualities which De Forest listed in his essay as belonging to the "chivalrous Southron:" "Audacity, vehemence, recklessness, passion, sentiment, prejudice, vanity, whimwhams, absurdity, culture, ignorance, courtliness, barbarism!"[20] A type of the Cálhounite, with a deep and sentimental attachment to his locality, he is "a true son of the sacred soil of his State" (327) and, like all of his clan, is acutely conscious of his status as "one of the representatives of South Carolina gentility and courtesy" (164).

Because he presents Peyton as a type of the "chivalrous Southron," De Forest is able to attack the chivalric code by describing the manners Peyton displays when he is most conscious of his duties according to the code. Through his presentation of Peyton, that is, De

Forest provides a graphic example of the falsity of the assumptions underlying the code. As Richard Weaver has pointed out in The Southern Tradition at Bay (1968), Southerners regarded chivalry as a method of humanizing men and of maintaining order in society: "Chivalry was construed as a support of civilization because by keeping their impulses in check, it preserved the humanity of men."[21] De Forest's portrait of Peyton shows that the code does not keep "impulses in check," but actually gives sanction to the basest of impulses. Thus, he presents Peyton as a man whose extremely tender sense of family honour leads repeatedly to violent and slightly absurd outbursts. For example, when Peyton hears that Wallace McAlister has "insulted" his son Vincent, he explodes with destructive passion:

> 'Why Vincent, it's the most unprovoked insult that I ever heard of. . . . No gentleman! A Beaumont no gentleman! By heavens, he deserves to be shot on sight, shot on the first street-corner, like a nigger stealer. He doesn't deserve a duel. The code is too good for him' (126).

He continues in this impassioned manner by criticising his sons for the "'soft notions'" which make them feel that they could accept an apology after this, "'the most unprovoked and brutal outrage that I ever heard of'" (128). He feels that the matter can only be ended by killing Wallace McAlister. Peyton gives way to a similar violent impulse when he learns that Frank had not disclosed his true identity when on the Mersey: "'I never heard of such infamous trickery, never! It's the most outrageous insult that ever our family was subjected to'" (133). De Forest employs such extreme rhetoric as a functional idiosyncrasy of manner. Through Peyton's use of the superlative degree to characterize each fresh insult, De Forest shows that Peyton's reactions are persistently out of all proportion to the actual nature of an offense. Peyton cannot admit that there are differences of degree in insults because he views any transgression of the code as an absolute attack on his or his family's honour. Furthermore, De Forest shows that Peyton does indeed respond impulsively to the affairs of the moment. Peyton repeatedly shows that the freshest wound smarts the most and supercedes all previous ones in magnitude. Most importantly, De Forest uses Peyton's habitually impulsive and extreme manner of responding to insults as an ironic comment on the chivalric code. De Forest's portrait indicates that the real brutality lies not in the offenses to the Beaumonts but in the savage vehemence which Peyton displays, a vehemence which compels him to demand blood to prove his gentility.

As De Forest's major representative of the "chivalrous Southron," Peyton is effectively employed to show the power of the chivalric code. De Forest presents him as a man who lives completely for honour, whether that honour demands peace or actions likely to cause bloodshed. An example of the first situation is when Peyton reluctantly agrees to one of the short-lived truces with the McAlisters.

He does so when Kershaw, whom he regards as a model of honourable conduct, declares that Frank's rescue of Kate constitutes a case in which "'the obligation of gratitude overbalances the obligation of vindication of gentility'" (150). His manner on this occasion, however, indicates that he has no deep belief that honour can be satisfied except by bloodshed: he leaves Kershaw the duty of informing the McAlister second that the challenge that Vincent Beaumont has issued to Wallace McAlister has been withdrawn and goes "shamefacedly" (145) into the house. An important example of the second situation occurs when his tender sense of honour comes into conflict with his extremely sentimental attachment to his daughter. He changes his mind about withdrawing from the election, an act which would promote peace with the McAlisters and assure Kate's happiness, when his son Vincent says that this act could be construed as dishonourable. This leads to fresh hostilities between the families and lessens Kate's chances of happiness.

Peyton's fiery devotion to the chivalric code obviously contrasts with Frank's humane concern for peace. De Forest contrasts the provincial type and the progressive type even more emphatically, however, by dramatizing attitudes towards the rule of the law and the need for industry. He supports the social fable in this way by indicating that Southern provincialism is both anarchic and retrograde.

The anarchic aspects of Southern society are suggested by De Forest's brief treatment of the question of legal conduct. He indicates that Southern society had written statutes which applied to everyone except the gentleman because the gentleman's sense of honour left him free to violate with impunity any statutes which he felt were not conducive to the maintainance of that honour. He shows, for instance, that Judge McAlister keeps in mind the fact that he is "a high-toned gentleman first, and an expounder of the statutes afterwards" (412) when the Judge avoids giving offence to the Beaumonts by refraining from placing Bentley Armitage, their relative, under a bond to keep the peace. The point that there is a double standard is made even more forcefully when Wallace McAlister tells Frank, "'We gentlemen are like necessity; we know no law. Law is for our inferiors.'" Frank's reply, "'Or for our betters'" (393), is an ironic reversal of the gentleman's grandiose concept of himself. It insists that class superiority does not necessarily indicate moral superiority. Colonel Kershaw makes the same point after Randolph Armitage accidentally shoots him. He points out that the Southern gentleman's lawlessness has undermined the moral structure of society because it violates the biblical injunction that vengeance is the right of God and makes a mockery of the State's legal system:

> 'We take punishment into our own hands. We cannot wait for the law. The consequence is that the State is full of homicide. It is wrong, Beaumont. It is a

> violation of the faith of man in man. It strikes at the base of society. It tends to barbarism' (359).

Kershaw's censure is dramatically supported by numerous episodes which show violence as prevalent in all classes. De Forest's graphic presentation of a cracker spree during which the jealous Sam Hicks shoots at Randolph Armitage, for example, shows the lowest class of whites to be just as murderous as the aristocrats. His portrait of the middle classes shows that they indulge in violence vicariously. Thus, in a brilliant and comic set piece, De Forest shows the middle class as casually accepting violence as a sign of the true aristocrat. This set piece contains the speech of drunken John Stokes, a well-to-do farmer, who condemns the McAlisters for the killing of Kershaw by declaring it "'one of the highest crimes an' misdemeanors to pop a man by accident'" (356). He offers by way of contrast the Beaumonts as model gentlemen:

> 'When they pop you, they mean it. They've shot as many as any other crowd in the State, an' never had no damn foolish accident yet, but allays bored the feller they drew bead on, an' no other. Now thar's men you can tie to; thar's men you can hev a confidence in; thar's men you can feel safe with' (365).

The lawlessness of the gentlemanly class is displayed throughout the novel, but the peculiar attitude of the aristocrats is perhaps best displayed when Frank violates the chivalric code for entirely humane reasons. This occurs when the violently drunk Tom Beaumont tries to murder him. Frank ties up Tom and declares that by doing so he is preventing Tom from disgracing himself in a rencontre. The Beaumonts and all of Hartland's chivalry, including Frank's brother Bruce, however, regard Frank's act as that of a villain. They insist that he would have been perfectly justified in killing his assailant but that the code does not permit him to humiliate Tom, for whatever noble reason, by restraining him. The result is that, because of a rational and humane act, the opponent of duelling is compelled to meet Tom under the rules of the code duello.

De Forest shows that the peculiar moral code which sanctions violence in the name of honour is not only a sign of anarchy but, in conjunction with the absence of meaningful industry, an indication of a retrograde society. Although he never treats slavery as anything more than a social fact, De Forest's picture of Southern life illustrates the truth of Tocqueville's observation that "Slavery . . . dishonors labor; it introduces idleness into society, and with idleness, ignorance and pride, luxury and distress. It enervates the powers of the mind, and benumbs the activity of man."[22]

De Forest, then, paints a society of leisure. He describes the "chivalry of Hartland" as "a race scornful of prudence and finance" (233). When Wilkins attends his store while others gossip about Frank's tying of Tom Beaumont, he appears as something of an anomaly in a town characterized by street-corner and back-of-the-shop conversation. De Forest even notes that this departure from local custom gets Wilkins into "temporary disfavor" (233) with the chivalry.

The aristocrats De Forest paints are truly otiose. They do not make even a pretense of working. Vincent Beaumont and Bent Armitage are physicians yet they practise only when a slave requires aid. Poinsett Beaumont is a lawyer who has never sought a case. The prerogatives of the slave-holding gentleman have enervated them and they lack all meaningful ambition. Their attitude is expressed by the droll Poinsett who observes that "'Idleness is dull; but work is duller'" (128).

Frank McAlister again serves as a contrast to these noble idlers of both feuding families. He is De Forest's example of the progressive spirit in action. He wants to apply his scientific knowledge to alter the course of Southern society: "'I want to open people's eyes. I want to be a benefactor to South Carolina'" (190). He is a new type of Southerner who does not see labour as beneath the dignity of a gentleman as the other aristocrats do. He has mental and moral resources proportionate to his immense physique and would elevate his region from its slough of ignorance and inertia by making it more like the energetic North. The new chivalry which he represents is not selfishly and narrowly concerned with personal honour but is dedicated to the advancement of the region. This new chivalry does not look backwards to past grievances as the Beaumonts and McAlisters do, but ahead to future concord and prosperity. Frank is, then, De Forest's warrior of science, ideas, and morality. But De Forest shows that Frank is too much of a novelty for a society which traditionally has scorn for the concept of an industrious gentleman. Frank's early fears that "he should have to drop his sciences and go to sleep upon cotton, like the rest of South Carolina" (191) are realized. In the end, Frank takes over the Kershaw estate and gives up science "as a thing not yet required by Carolinians" (424).

By marrying Kate and by taking over the Kershaw plantation, Frank, of course, forges permanent links between the Beaumonts and the McAlisters and does much to ensure that they will drop the creed of their forefathers, at least as far as duelling is concerned. This moral victory does achieve a measure of social harmony, but it is not a complete social victory. Frank's decision to take the plantation and to abandon science quite clearly marks him as a victim of his provincial environment. As the conclusion of a comparison of manners, Frank's resignation suggests that the individual, no matter how noble and talented, may be frustrated in his ambitions by the narrow values of his society. Frank's resignation thus constitutes an extension of the attack on provincialism.

The comparison of provincial and progressive attitudes and conduct, then, is one major way in which De Forest uses the procedures of the novel of manners to develop his social fable. The second is satire of Southern conduct. Such satire is found throughout the novel. It occurs, for instance, in John Stokes's speech supporting Peyton's Senate candidacy. There it not only operates as a criticism of Southern voting customs but also suggests, comically and indirectly, that the aristocrats do not exert a totally wholesome moral influence over the community:

> 'He's a man that South-Carolinians will take a heap of trouble for. We never had an election yet but what loads of fellers would pile over the line from every district round here, walkin' or ridin' ten or fifteen miles perhaps to give him a lift, an' that too after going as fur for their own men whar they belong. An' they're right; they're right in takin' all that extra trouble for him; he deserves it' (294).

De Forest's most important use of satire, however, touches much more directly on the chivalric code. Shields McIlwaine is largely right in describing Kate Beaumont as "a broad satire on the code duello"[23] because De Forest ridicules the idea of civilized men duelling throughout the novel. In particular, De Forest does this in two ludicrous episodes which parallel the more serious encounters in the novel. In these two episodes De Forest strips duelling of all its chivalric trappings to show that the institution itself is absurd.

The first occurs when Cato, Peyton Beaumont's slave, recounts his fight with Matt, a McAlister slave. Cato's narrative shows that both slaves feel the family pride of their masters and fight because they feel it is expected of them when someone criticizes their manners. The slaves' shoving match--their duel is no more than that--satirizes the idea of fighting over polite manners and therefore makes Vincent Beaumont's similar quarrel with Wally McAlister seem even more absurd. Peyton, however, cannot appreciate this. He feels that the slaves should have done more than just push each other. He automatically accepts the basis of the quarrel as reasonable, that is, and only disagrees with its resolution. He thinks the slave is a coward but forgives because he believes that "chivalry, prowess, and the like were properly the business of white people" (130). This note of prejudice adds a fine finishing touch to De Forest's satire. De Forest here indicates that for Peyton a white man becomes chivalrous when he acts even more absurdly than his slaves, when he goes as far as to kill for a trivial reason.

The second episode is an excellent burlesque, much in the style of the South-Western humourists. During one of his regular "benders," Randolph Armitage becomes, as he always does when drunk, obnoxious and pugnacious. He begins fighting with his cracker companion, Readhead Saxon. Mrs. Saxon, worried about her husband's safety, speaks for Randolph's sleeping, aristocratic conscience. She scolds him for violating the chivalric code by fighting with someone of an inferior class: "'Ain't you a high-tone gentleman, Square Armitage? Then go whar you b'long, an' fight with yer own sort. Oughter be shamed of yerself, pickin' musses with crackers'" (287). Randolph, however, is too drunk to feel punctilious and demands a fight. His brother, Bentley, therefore conspires with Mrs. Saxon to stage a sham duel. De Forest states explicitly the intent of the scene when he describes Randolph assenting to the duel "with a drunken solemnity which finely satirized the behavior usual with principals in real affairs of honor" (288). Although he is just as drunk, Readhead displays more awareness of the situation than Randolph because he notices the "absurdity in the proposition" (288) of a duel. The cracker class, of course, does not, like the chivalric class, follow a ritual when it wants to create mayhem. Readhead therefore objects that since he is not a gentleman, he should not fight a duel. His objections are overcome and he and Randolph, because they can no longer stand up, are propped up in corners of the cabin and handed empty pistols. On cue, they begin shooting. Each displays a grim determination to kill the other as he fires repeatedly until the chambers of his gun are empty. When the firing ends, their conduct again satirizes the conduct of the genuine duels because they decide to shake hands and be friends: "There was shaking hands accordingly, as in more elegant and sober affairs of honor, and two late enemies complimenting each other as high-toned gentlemen, etc., etc., while Molly Saxon fairly capered and stamped with delight" (290).

This duel, fought in a cabin rather than on the "field of honour," is one of De Forest's strongest blows at duelling. He shows that violence is such an integral part of the Southern character that a Southerner, even though he cannot stand unaided and cannot remember why he is fighting, will maintain a purpose to kill a man. The parallel with the Beaumont-McAlister feud is obvious. These families are like the drunken duelists because their grounds for fighting are absurd. The feud began as a political disagreement, but this happened so long ago that Frank McAlister has never heard the reason. The families continue the feud simply because it is a custom. The mock duel also makes the very act of duelling ridiculous. None of the dignity of the Beaumont-McAlister affairs is evident, but the duels are essentially alike in intent. Stripped of chivalric rhetoric and ritual, the duel becomes an effort to murder another human being for reasons which are sinfully petty. The "chivalrous Southrons," De Forest implies, are either drunk from alcohol or from chivalric notions because they do not realize this.

De Forest employs a third major device in his presentation of Southern manners to interpret the characters and their conduct and, thus, to reinforce their value as conceptual agents in the social fable. He repeatedly employs two groups of images, the animal and the barbarian, when describing Southerners and their typical conduct. These images may be regarded as another element of De Forest's "broad satire" because they deflate Southern pretensions to civilization by insisting on the brutality and savagery of Southern life.

In novels of the Civil War era, Southerners were frequently compared to thoroughbred horses whose "hot blood" made them ferocious and high-strung.[24] In Kate Beaumont De Forest uses this traditional thoroughbred comparison to indicate that the Southerner's quick ferocity is not necessarily a virtue. The Beaumont family is, thus, admitted to have "Warm hearts" which lead them to "incessant activity," but this activity is "not, however, in the manner of lambs, kids, and other playful creatures; rather like blood horses, puissant for either good or evil" (312). De Forest's point is that the Southerner required some restraint which the chivalric code, which glorified the passionate blood horse qualities of the aristocrat, did not provide. Instead of keeping the "impulses in check," that is, it celebrated the very impulses which lead to violence. Thus, De Forest shows that Peyton's resolve to be reticent is quickly forgotten when Nellie asks him to withdraw from the election by describing Peyton as impulsively "starting like an angered horse" (319).

Although De Forest accepts the animal metaphor as a method of interpreting Southern manners, he alters its usual implications. His images are not generally those of the chivalric animal, the horse (French, cheval), but most often are images of wild and ferocious beasts. In this way De Forest suggests that the world of the Southern aristocrat is not the happy garden world of the pastoral idyll and the plantation myth, but a kind of jungle of manners and morals.

This suggestion is made through the images employed in describing even minor characters. At the cracker ball there is "cleverness of a wolfish or foxy nature" (266). Sam Hicks, the mountaineer who shoots at Randolph Armitage, shows that he is "as independent and fierce and lithe as a wild-cat" (270). General Johnson, the fantastic orator and promoter of duels, is called a "pugnacious old tiger" (326). Tom Beaumont, who impetuously seeks duels, is described as a "lion-cub" (131) and a "bull-dog" (329). Randolph Armitage, who displays the worst traits of the aristocrat because the Southern gentleman's usual vice, alcohol, robs him of the ability to cover his brutality with a facade of fine manners, is repeatedly diminished in stature by animal images. Most frequently he is compared to a monkey. There are possible Darwinian overtones here because Randolph is clearly, like Josie Murray in Playing the Mischief, a kind of moral throwback. His alcoholism, that is, makes him completely a creature of violent impulses. Thus, his wife, Nellie, describes the wanton destruction which accompanies one of his drinking bouts and says, "'The man was more like a crazy monkey than like a human being'" (275). His drunkenness repeatedly leads him to commit "freaks beyond the imagination of monkeys" (286). When one of his bouts leads to the tragic killing of Kershaw, he is presented as having "an indescribably stupid leer, not unlike the stolid, savage grin of an angry baboon" (347). Such images, which criticise the Southern penchant for violence, are even applied in a mild way to the pacific Major Lawson because he is fond of talking about duels. When doing so, he displays "the sorrow of a dog over a toothsome bone" (109).

De Forest employs animal imagery most frequently when describing Peyton Beaumont because Peyton is the head of the district's most pugnacious and, hence, bestial family. De Forest's impressive initial description of Peyton, establishes his likeness to a beast. De Forest presents him as a hairy, tousled creature whose hand, protruding from the bed-clothes, is "so hairy it might remind one of the paw of an animal" (123). Awakened by his servant, Peyton gives a "savage grunt" (122). After his customary morning cocktail he becomes less ferocious, but his violence is merely latent since he is like a "placated tiger" (125). Throughout the novel, Peyton's manner, especially when displeased, is like that of an animal because he continually growls. His ferocity on these occasions is made manifest by animal images: he is a "wild boar" (318), a "tiger scenting prey" (317), an "excited eagle" (183), a "lion" (136), or, less magnificently, an "old fighting-cock" (183).

The animal images which cluster around Peyton interpret him as a character drawn to a type of regional manners. The images obviously contribute to a point necessary to the social fable, that the provincial code of manners creates an anarchic moral world. Peyton's presentation as a regional type, however, is somewhat balanced by the addition of qualities derived from sentimental formuli. Peyton, that is, is described as "a singularly affectionate parent" (324). The actual presentation of him as such, however, conforms to the thematic requirements of the social fable. De Forest, in fact, presents Peyton's relationship with his daughter Kate through techniques reminiscent of beast fables. He shows, then, that Peyton's love and devotion tames the destructive wildness which the code intensifies. When Kate seeks to soothe him, for instance, Peyton utters "a chastened, not unmelodious growl like that of a panther at the approach of his favorite keeper" (133). On another occasion, he is described as "a tiger who had been tamed by his children, and easily followed their leading" (255). The use of animal images here establishes something of a fable in which Beauty (Kate) tames the Beast (Peyton). This beast fable embodies in miniature the theme of the social fable. It indicates that just as love within a family can create happiness and harmony, so too its social equivalent, charity, can create social harmony by taming the bestial impulses sanctioned by the provincial code.

De Forest similarly uses a second series of images, that dealing with primitive, savage, or feudal peoples and customs. These images force a comparison between nineteenth-century Southern conduct and that typical of earlier periods of social development. The comparison is actually made quite directly when Major Lawson tells Frank his reasons for believing that Frank's rescue of Kate will bring about the end of the feud:

> 'Why, bless you, man, the Beaumonts are not barbarians of the Middle Ages. They--I remember the old feud--I respect your natural prejudices--but they, you will excuse me for saying so, are South Carolina gentlemen. They have the polish and humanity--you will surely pardon me--of the nineteenth century' (107-8).

Lawson's reiterated apologies, a mannerism which indicates that he fears that his statement could provide grounds for a duel, signal the heavy irony of this passage. Throughout the novel De Forest employs images which indicate that Southerners do not display "'the polish and humanity . . . of the nineteenth century.'" His images, that is, directly attack the concept of chivalry as an anachronism.

The concept of chivalry, of course, was based on an interpretation of the conduct of the medieval knight and gained support in the South because there was a backward-looking romanticism there which avidly accepted notions formulated in Sir Walter Scott's Waverly novels. De Forest believed in what Twain called "the genuine and wholesome civilization of the nineteenth century"[25] and obviously regarded chivalric ideas like the duel as inappropriate to it. His images point to his feeling that the ante-bellum South possessed, as Twain claimed of the postbellum South, a "Walter Scott Middle-Age sham civilization."[26] His images indicate that he would agree with Lowell, who angrily asked in the North American Review (October, 1866), "Is it not time that these men were transplanted at last into the nineteenth century . . . ?"[27]

De Forest presents Southern society as being anachronistic, for example, in his description of the election speeches which show that the supporters of both candidates are "in the highest-toned fashion, prepared to exterminate their adversaries if the latter persistently refused to hearken to reason" (292):

> Excepting that the weapons were concealed, these election scenes resembled the political assemblages of the ancient Gauls, who discussed questions of war and peace with spear in hand and buckler on shoulder. All these gaunt and long-legged men . . . were as bellicose as so many Scotch Highlanders of three hundred years ago (292-93).

He also says that the Beaumonts possess "a morality very different from the morality of the hard-working, law-abiding bourgeois" and that "If we want to find a parallel to the Beaumonts in some other land, we must, I think, go to the Green Erin of one or two hundred years ago, and resurrect the profuse, reckless, quarrelsome, heroic O'Neills and O'Learys and O'Sullivans" (235). De Forest characterizes Peyton Beaumont, in particular, as an anachronism because of his complete commitment to the code duello. Thus he describes Peyton as "a clean but very savage buccaneer" (124), "a gentlemanly Turk or even a sultan" (126), an "affectionate old gladiator" (132), "something of a savage" (234), a "grim old knight" (247), an heroic old "Tartar" (346), a "war-like old chieftain"

(324), and "the sheik, the patriarch of the Beaumont tribe" (324). At his tribe's family parliaments the men sit "as gravely as Indian sachems in a council" (149). Beaumont is also like an Indian when, after having scolded Tom, he offers him a cigar as their "calumet of peace" (185). Furthermore, De Forest describes Peyton as fearing that Kershaw would make peace and thus force him to wash off his "war-paint" (335).

De Forest's images, then, do not make a comparison between Southern conventions and a single set of earlier ones. Many of them do point to the "Walter Scott Middle-Age sham" of the chivalric code. The celebrant of nineteenth-century "humanity and polish," Lawson, finds when he becomes Frank's second, for example, that a duel, "the grandest ceremony of the knightly society in which he had been bred," is actually "a monstrous event" (242). Just as many images, however, raise comparisons with other periods and cultures. Lawson, then, also thinks of the field of honour as the Roman "arena of gladiators" (238). De Forest did not, therefore, define a pattern of social evolution as did the later naturalistic thinkers, like Thorstein Veblen, who typically described society as passing through stages of savagery, barbarism, and civilization.[28] Nevertheless, De Forest's images seem to be controlled by key conceptions which received rigid formulation by the naturalists. De Forest's criticism is based on what William Fielding Ogburn finally defined in 1922 as "cultural lag."[29]

Frank McAlister, that is, is intended to be De Forest's example of the nineteenth-century gentleman. He properly reminds his brother Wallace of "'converted cannibals coming home to preach to their tribe'" (154) because his contact with civilized European ideas makes him something of a missionary who is trying to convince his provincial society that its code is actually a "'beastly barbarity'" (236). Frank's conduct and statements thus constitute the standard of the nineteenth century. The provincial South is tested against it and found wanting. De Forest's images, therefore, satirize Southerners for a ludicrous persistence in conventions appropriate to earlier societies but completely inappropriate to the claims of nineteenth-century humanity and civilization.

De Forest's procedures as a novelist of manners--his presentation of Southern types, his comparison of their conduct with that of a progressive type, his satiric treatment of the code duello, and his use of interpretive images--obviously contribute to his social fable. They add concreteness and vitality to De Forest's structure of conflict. The love story, which De Forest employs to dramatize the reconciliation of diversities, contains flaws, however, and these flaws prevent the integration of the novel of manners and the social fable from being entirely successful.

The resolution of the love story itself is one factor which weakens the novel as a social fable. De

Forest's social fable demands that the lovers marry. The conventional, happy-ending marriage is meant to be a triumph of love or charity over the hate which the anachronistic code breeds. Because Frank gives up science when he takes over the Kershaw estate, however, the victory of progressive forces in the social fable does not seem quite that clear. Frank's failure to renovate Southern society is not in itself disconcerting. De Forest had to be true to actual historical conditions. Furthermore, Frank's resignation is, as I have shown earlier, acceptable as a conclusion to a comparison of manners. Its implications within the social fable, however, are very disturbing. Frank is not permitted to maintain his function as an agent of and spokesman for enlightened ideas. Instead, Frank is assimilated by Southern society for, as Peyton says, "'He is Kershaw over again'" (424). Kershaw is presented as the finest specimen of the old school gentleman:

> He was one of those simple, pure, honorable, sensible country gentlemen (of whom one meets more perhaps in our Southern States than in most other portions of this planet) who strike one as having a reserve of moral and intellectual power too great for their chances of action, and who lead one to trust that Washingtons will still be forthcoming when their country needs (140).

It is possible to interpret this, as Frank Bergmann does, as an indication that De Forest's "message" is that "there are to be found in the 'old' South reserves 'of moral and intellectual power' like Kershaw's that only need to be set free."[30] It does not, however, explain why such reserves cannot be utilized to free themselves or why the struggle for renovation must be totally abandoned. The weakness here is that this conclusion transforms much of the comparison of manners into an elaborate red herring. Because Frank and Kate are both nothing more than younger versions of Kershaw,[31] their European experiences seem inconsequential. Everything they represent at the end has been in the society all along. Thus, the careful contrast between Frank and Kate as cosmopolitans and their families as provincials amounts to nothing because it does not make a vital contribution to the fable.

The shift in Frank's function and the thematically unsatisfying conclusion are, in many ways, attributable to De Forest's inept presentation of Frank. The plot demands that the lovers feel a passion which is strong enough to make them eager to resist the dictates of the traditional feud. De Forest, however, does not treat their passions with artistry and seriousness. Instead, he vacillates between a satiric and a conventional, artificial presentation of the lovers and their passions.

De Forest's difficulties in presenting Frank are evident as early as the Mersey section. There he seems to take delight in showing how a rational and sober scholar who had planned to devote his voyage home to "an uninterrupted course of study" (60) can be transformed into a more emotional and sociable man by having his heart touched by love for a woman. Thus, De Forest presents him as "a clear-headed youth, but getting ungovernable about the heart" (65).

In the shore sections, Frank loses most of his value as the representative of enlightened manners and morals because De Forest emphasizes the victory of Frank's emotions over his reason and employs him to satirize the kind of passion one would expect in typical romantic fiction of the period. The most pronounced example of this occurs after Frank's duel with Tom Beaumont. Frank waxes ecstatic over his love for Kate until his condition becomes "consciousness, rather than intelligence" (248). His musings become a combination of "indescribably delicious" romantic reveries, in which he elevates Kate to the level of a goddess whom he has been privileged to serve, and "an under voice of deepest despair" (248). Quoting Schiller to himself, he concludes that he would be content to die. De Forest notes that in these sentimental rantings, "His mood was more potent than mere revery; it rose to an exaltation which was almost mania; he was as irrational as those who love with their whole being" (249). The supposedly rational hero thus wallows in his own unbalanced emotions and De Forest lays bare all the absurdity of the situation. Frank, for instance, muses that Kate "'lifted me up like a queen out of mere egotism,'" yet he creates a sentimentally inflated picture of himself: "'I am nobler than you think me, for I love Kate Beaumont'" (249). De Forest tries to suppress laughter at this point: "Let us not jeer at him;

let us study him reverently. If any man is clean of the world, it is the lover; if any man is pure in heart, it is the lover" (250). The profound undercurrent of Frank's emotion, however, is totally obscured by the ludicrous nature of its surface manifestations. Frank, for example, goes to a stile over which he had once helped Kate to pass and stands "for a long time contemplating the worm-eaten rail, repeatedly kissing the spot on which he remembered that her foot had rested" (252). De Forest again tries to suggest that Frank possesses nobility because of his emotions: "the nobility of a soul is gauged as much by its emotional, as by its intellectual strength; the being who feels is as sublime as the being who thinks" (237). Frank himself also expresses this idea: "'I think a great heart is nobler than a great brain'" (299).

Frank is not as thoroughly satirized as Imogen Eleonore Jones, the sentimentalist who appeared in De Forest's next novel, but it is only De Forest's interpretation of him, not any convincing presentation of his manners, which allows us to distinguish between their similar excesses. De Forest's interpretation of Frank's absurd behaviour, as James Gargano notes, actually "tends not only to excuse but to idealize it."[32] Both Frank and Kate thus lose their value as representatives of a rational and humane mode of conduct. By the end both are simply conventional idealizations. De Forest says of Kate, for instance, "The Creator has seldom fashioned a being more sensitive, more maidenly modest, than was this girl" (324). Nellie indicates Frank's ideal nature when she declares, "'He hasn't a vice, not even of temper'" (321).

De Forest's satirical and conventional treatment of Frank is inappropriate. The novel requires a convincing display of manners to make Frank an effective agent of nineteenth-century reason in the fable. De Forest's failure to bring Frank to life as a cosmopolitan and his failure to treat Frank consistently as the voice of reasonable and humanitarian conduct explains in part why De Forest had to introduce into the novel a second spokesman for reason. Why it should be a Southerner, Kershaw, is not so obvious. Although Kershaw is compared to Washington and is called by some "'the last of the barons'" (364), it is not possible to consider him the embodiment of a former Southern Golden Age since the novel provides no other evidence that past conditions were superior to the present ones and it is clearly indicated that Kershaw himself once subscribed to the code he now finds abhorrent. The only real explanation for Kershaw's rôle is that he is meant to be a man of wisdom and sensitivity who has overcome provincial limitations because he has seen the suffering caused by an inhumane code.

If this is the case, De Forest is not very successful in making it clear that either broadening experiences or a wise analysis of home ideas can free one from the limitations of provincialism. This is because he does not devote sufficient attention to the reasons for Kershaw's rejection of the *code duello*. Furthermore, he clearly intends Kershaw, the White Rose of Chivalry, to represent the noble elements of the Southern character and thus to operate as a standard for judging the conduct of the other aristocrats. De Forest fails, however, to display his manners in such a way that he is transformed from a general concept of goodness into a plausible, flesh and blood Southerner. Kershaw, as Gargano says, is "little more than an idealized and conventional type"[33] because he is a man so good that he is Reverend Arthur Gilyard's "own model of deportment and life" (358).

The failure to portray Kershaw convincingly weakens *Kate Beaumont* because Kershaw plays a major role in terminating the feud. When he is accidentally shot, he preaches the novel's lesson of charity on his death bed. Because he is only an idealization, however, he seems too much of a *deus ex machina* in the social fable. He seems, that is, too much of a concept dragged in to bring about a quick reconciliation of differences, than one integral to the structure. The premise of the *Mersey* section established a structure of conflict between the young and the old, the progressive and the reactionary, the cosmopolitan and the provincial. Although Kershaw has a dramatic and thematically important role, I think that De Forest's unconvincing presentation of him unnecessarily blunts these sharp conflicts.

The final flaw in the love story is one I have already mentioned. De Forest fails to give Mrs. Chester significance either as a type in the study of manners or as an agent in the social fable. In the Mersey section she seems intended as a type of the inexorably provincial aristocratic women of the South. Throughout most of the novel, however, she performs as a faded belle desperately trying to retain her youth. She does not, then, add much of substance to De Forest's portrait of ante-bellum manners. She is simply an eccentric whom De Forest treats with contempt. He emphasizes her ludicrous nature, for example, by comparing the manners she displays when angry to those of the "washerwoman or chambermaid of low comedy" (182). Furthermore, she is in the love story only an "old hoyden" (170) and a "cracked old flirt" (194). Her desperate schemes to separate the lovers are mechanical and unnecessary plot devices and illustrate absolutely nothing. Her absence of function is underlined by the fact that De Forest purges her from the novel contemptuously by having her die of "softening of the brain" (424).

Although the conventionality of the love story prevents the successful integration of the novel of manners and the social fable, Kate Beaumont is not an absolute failure. It has, I think, genuine merit as a novel of manners. It is, for one thing, full of fascinating characters and scenes. It is also generally free of the romanticism and the "namby-pambyism and provincial vanity" which De Forest said made the "elder romances of Dixie . . . deserve better than any other results of human labor that I am aware of, the native epithet of 'powerful weak.'"[34] Because De Forest concentrates on periods of crisis, his portrait of ante-bellum Southern life may not be a faithful transcript of daily life,[35] but it does clearly reveal what De Forest felt were the assumptions underlying the behaviour of "chivalrous Southrons." In addition, De Forest preserved the outlines of both the "high-toned" type and the cracker and thereby achieved a large measure of success as an ethnographer.

Howells was so impressed with Kate Beaumont that he called it "the first full and perfect picture of Southern society of the times before the war."[36] Kate Beaumont is not a "perfect picture," nor is it, as Howells said on another occasion, De Forest's "shapeliest novel."[37] Still, its merits as a novel of manners are such that it does have the kind of historical importance Howells was suggesting. It does, that is, provide a sense of ante-bellum life which can be found in no earlier novel. I think, then, that it is reasonable to claim that in Kate Beaumont De Forest earned importance as the first penetrating novelist of Southern manners.

Notes

[1] *Kate Beaumont*, ed. Joseph Jay Rubin (State College, Pennsylvania: Bald Eagle Press, 1963), p. 70. Page numbers for further quotations from this edition will be cited in parentheses.

[2] *Harvests of Change* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 34.

[3] "John W. De Forest: A Critical Study of His Novels," Diss. Cornell 1955, p. 162.

[4] Gargano, pp. 164-65, makes a similar point.

[5] Gargano, pp. 163-64, makes a similar point.

[6] "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," in *The Liberal Imagination* (1950; rpt. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), p. 201.

[7] "John De Forest in New Haven," *New York Times*, Saturday Supplement, 17 Dec. 1898, p. 856.

[8] "J. W. De Forest, Pioneer Realist," *Univ. of Wyoming Publications*, 9 (31 Aug. 1942), 11.

[9] Gargano, p. 166.

[10] *The Worthy Gentleman of Democracy* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitatsverlag, 1971), p. 68. De Forest describes Frank's face: "there was in it a wealth of both dignity and benignity; it reminded one of the early portraits of Washington" (50).

[11] *Miss Ravenel's Conversion*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New York: Rinehart, 1955), p. 461.

[12] Gargano, pp. 163-64.

[13] Ibid., p. 165.

[14] Rubin, Introduction to *Kate Beaumont*, p. 22, says in an aside to his discussion of the *Mersey* chapters that "Cooper used the same frame in *Homeward Bound*."

[15] Cooper, *Homeward Bound*, *The Complete Works of J. Fenimore Cooper*, Leather-Stocking Edition (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, n.d.), XIII, iii.

[16] Cooper, *Home As Found*, *The Complete Works of J. Fenimore Cooper*, Leather-Stocking Edition (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, n.d.), XIV, iv.

[17] De Forest changed his opinion about Cooper. In "The Great American Novel," *The Nation*, 6 (9 Jan. 1868), 27, he said that Cooper's portraits of "civilized groups" were "something less natural than the wax figures of Barnum's old museum." James F. Light, *John William De Forest*, Twayne's United States Authors Series, 82 (New York: Twayne, 1965), p. 164, quotes De Forest's praise of Cooper's "noble, hearty, fervid nature" which De Forest sent in a letter (25 Jan. 1883) to Thomas Lounsbury, Cooper's biographer.

[18] *A Union Officer in the Reconstruction*, ed. James H. Croushore and David M. Potter (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1948), p. 203.

[19] Ibid., pp. 203-4.

[20] Ibid., p. 203.

[21] *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, ed. George Core and M. E. Bradford (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1968), p. 69, n. 49.

[22] *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve, rev. ed. (New York: Colonial Press, 1899), I, 30.

[23] *The Southern Poor-White from Lubberland to Tobacco Road* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1939), p. 94.

[24] Robert A. Lively, *Fiction Fights the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1957), p. 123.

[25] *Life on the Mississippi*, *The Writings of Mark Twain*, Definitive Ed. (New York: Gabriel Wells, 1922), XII, 375.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Quoted by Jay B. Hubbell, *The South in American Literature, 1607-1900* ([Durham, North Carolina:] Duke Univ. Press, 1954), p. 697.

[28] See Stow Persons, *American Minds* (New York: Henry Holt, 1958), p. 304.

[29] Ibid., pp. 233-34.

[30] Bergmann, p. 68.

[31] *Kate Beaumont*, p. 395, Vincent identifies Kate with Kershaw.

[32] Gargano, p. 184.

[33] Ibid., p. 185.

[34] A Union Officer in the Reconstruction, p. 203. Philip Hastings Ford, "The Techniques of John William De Forest, Transitional Novelist," Diss. Ohio State 1953, pp. 43-45, stresses that De Forest's use of common-place settings makes his work less romantic than that of other writers who have portrayed the South.

[35] S., "Kate Beaumont. By J. W. De Forrest [sic]," rev. of Kate Beaumont, Southern Magazine (Baltimore), 11 (July 1872), 119-20, called the story a libel: "The libel lies in the composition of the picture, in the assembling of these various characters upon one canvas as a presentation of the average life of South Carolina . . . ."

[36] "Recent Literature," rev. of Kate Beaumont, Atlantic Monthly, 29 (March 1872), 364.

[37] "The Heroine of 'Kate Beaumont,'" in Heroine's of Fiction (New York and London: Harper's, 1901), II, 153.

CHAPTER VI

THE POLITICS OF PLUNDER: HONEST JOHN VANE AND PLAYING THE MISCHIEF

I

The heady atmosphere of economic expansion transformed American politics after the Civil War into a quest for booty. Congressmen and Senators plundered the Treasury by shamelessly legislating fortunes into their own pockets. De Forest was outraged. In Miss Ravenel's Conversion he had presented the Civil War as something very like a contest between Heaven and Hell. Now he saw that economic progress and concern for social justice, which he had celebrated as signs of Divine approbation, were being used to cloak the machinations of something very like a new satanic host. The overwhelming corruption of the Grant Administration convinced De Forest that the path of special legislation followed by the politicians led, as E. L. Godkin declared in The Nation, "straight to the bottomless pit."[1]

De Forest gave expression to his concern in several short social fables in which he characterized members of the powerful lobbies either as devils or as men possessed by devils. In "The Colored Member"[2] Jack Hunt is described as a "lobbying Mephistophiles."[3] He is a carpetbagger who manipulates an ignorant freed slave, described as a "dusky Faust,"[4] by getting him elected to office in order to make him the agent of plundering schemes. In "An Inspired Lobbyist"[5] the title character is Ananias Pullwool, a man symbolic in both given name[6] and surname, who "has the Devil in him"[7] and demonstrates it by cheating two towns which are fighting to be declared state capital. "The Other Fellow"[8] describes "'a devil of an agent'"[9] who corrupts and drives mad Senator Wesley.

De Forest also illustrated his belief that current political practices were leading the American soul to perdition in two major works, *Honest John Vane* (1875) and *Playing the Mischief* (1875). In each of these he also employs the devil figure to drive home his point. Thus, he repeatedly describes Darius Dorman, the lobbyist in *Honest John Vane*, as sooty and suggests that "there might be a twitching tail inside his trousers."[10] He makes Jacob Pike, the agent in *Playing the Mischief*, also seem satanic by presenting him as a man who discusses political strategy "with Jack Hunt, and Ananias Pullwool, and Darius Dorman, and other equally abominable angels of this nether region."[11]

Both of these extended explorations of American political life are novels of purpose. They demonstrate in fictional form the social thesis De Forest articulated in his essay, "The 'High-Toned Gentleman:'" "politics deserve the care of the best and wisest."[12] In these novels De Forest reveals himself to be a conservative in the mould of Hugh Henry Brackenridge and James Fenimore Cooper, writers who had earlier used fiction as a vehicle for political criticism. Like them, De Forest identifies many of the problems in American politics as stemming from the habit of electing men demonstrably unqualified to hold office. In each novel he implies that the American political present marks a decline from the past when the government was controlled by true gentlemen like Washington.

This idea of decline is presented in several places in _Honest John Vane_. Vane, for example, gets his nomination as a compromise candidate. The electorate objects to the aristocratic Saltonstall simply because he is too much of a gentleman. De Forest here indicates that excessive zeal makes the American democrat rebel against any implication of an hereditary aristocracy and thus reject the very best men as leaders. The corrupt Bummer is also rejected, but not on moral grounds. His crime is getting caught and then confessing to his transgressions. The leaders of the convention object to this as a violation of the current political code which will excuse any violation of trust as long as it is not publicized. De Forest satirizes this code by means of a heavily ironic allusion to Parson Weems's popular tale about Washington: "'A man, by George, that would cut the cherry tree, and then tell of it, wasn't fit to guide the destinies of his country'" (76). This leaves Vane who is chosen for reasons as absurd as those which led to the rejection of Saltonstall and Bummer. De Forest, that is, satirizes the Jacksonian veneration of the common man and the self-made man which makes Vane completely acceptable as a candidate:

> He was too ignorant to be a professor in the State university, or even a teacher in one of the city schools; but it was presumed that he would answer well enough as a law-giver for a complicated Republic containing forty millions of people (97).

It is the very lack of ability and education which De Forest establishes as factors leading to Vane's corruption.

In Playing the Mischief De Forest presents the same idea that corruption is "'the fruit that universal suffrage bears when the industrious and virtuous cease to care for politics" (376). Congressman Sykes Drummond makes an explicit comparison between the integrity of the gentlemanly Founding Fathers and the corrupt Jacksonian opportunists:

> 'I tell you, Mrs. Murray, that this state is rottener than Denmark. Well, there is one comfort, it gives us a chance. If George Washington's Congress of old-style, high-stepping country notables was sitting now, you and I couldn't get our claims through' (193).

Although both novels express a similar moral idea, Honest John Vane and Playing the Mischief do display significant differences. The first focuses on Congress itself in order to explain some of the reasons for the politics of plunder. The second, while it does not neglect a presentation of politicians, focuses on a representative member of the public and on the lobbyists in order to convey the moral climate which permits corruption to flourish. More important than this difference of focus is the difference in form. Honest John Vane is predominantly a social fable. De Forest does not attempt in it to record society and social types with the minuteness and exactitude which distinguishes his major efforts as a novelist of manners. Playing the Mischief, by way of contrast, is primarily a novel of manners which records the moral and social vulgarity of American political life. It criticizes Washington political society without resorting to the obvious allegorical structure and simplified characterization which make Honest John Vane so patently a social fable.

Honest John Vane, is not, however, a social fable only, and Playing the Mischief is not a novel of manners only. These two novels represent attempts to achieve similar purposes by means of different balances between the novel of manners and the social fable. Both, I believe, are successful.

Honest John Vane is the more limited work. De Forest proceeds in this allegorical social fable very much as would an editorial cartoonist like Thomas Nash for he presents his conceptual agents as caricatures of political types.[13] Nevertheless, De Forest worked well within his self-imposed limitations. He produced a work which still retains its passionate heat and humour and may well be the finest nineteenth-century satire of American politicians.

I will show in the following section of this chapter, therefore, that *Honest John Vane* is satisfyingly structured as a social fable. I will then show that this social fable is complemented by depictions and a pattern drawn from the novel of manners. These components of the novel of manners give *Honest John Vane* additional impact because they firmly anchor the moral allegory of the social fable in the world of social reality.

In *Playing the Mischief* De Forest does not follow the method of Nast but that of Hogarth. He creates a vivid and comic panorama of Washington social life which exposes the assumptions underlying the conduct of major social types. In the third section of this chapter, then, I will show that he successfully organizes this comedy of manners as a social fable illustrating a social thesis. By means of my analysis I hope to show that *Playing the Mischief* deserves recognition as De Forest's best work because it is his most natural blending of the novel of manners and the social fable.

II

The most notorious scandal of the Grant Administration was that involving the Crédit Mobilier, a fraudulent company formed to divert funds intended for the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad into the pockets of a select group of shareholders. De Forest energetically assaulted the scheme in *Honest John Vane* by tracing the career of

Vane, an ignorant, self-made man who becomes involved in a similar swindle after being elected to Congress. In his novel, De Forest indicates the grotesque dimensions of the swindle by means of satirical distortion for, as Light notes, in De Forest's version "the Union Pacific becomes the Great Subfluvial Tunnel, the purpose of which is to unite Lake Superior and the Gulf of Mexico, and the Crédit Mobilier becomes a sub-tunnel, the real purpose of which is to defraud the public."[14] De Forest's topical satire is, to a certain extent, a _roman à clèf_,[15] but it is more than an attack on one fraud and one particular corrupt group. De Forest attacks special legislation, lobbyists, and Congressmen in _Honest John Vane_ because he feels that they have made corruption the one convention of political life. His attack is designed, ultimately, to convince the public that its habit of electing to office such unworthy men as Vane permits and even encourages corruption.

Sometimes De Forest's indignation in _Honest John Vane_ does make him display, as Henry James charged, "more energy than delicacy."[16] There are rather too many denunciations which are unnecessary because their point has been adequately dramatized. Furthermore, at least one of De Forest's characters is sketched, as James claimed, "rather coarsely from the artistic point of view."[17] Nearly every critic of the book has rightly found fault with De Forest's presentation of Darius Dorman, the representative of the lobby, for, as Gordon Milne says in

The American Political Novel (1966), "De Forest tries too hard to liken him to the devil."[18] The result is that De Forest fails to create the genuine ambiguity he so obviously intends because the stress on Dorman's diabolical nature is far greater than the counterbalancing suggestions of his status as a low-born human.

Nevertheless, Honest John Vane is not, as James declared, "a tract for popular distribution."[19] Milne, I believe, is correct when he challenges James by asserting that "De Forest's use of a Congressional career to develop his antilobby thesis provides a subtlety of approach which a tract would lack."[20] By dramatizing his attack on corruption, that is, De Forest allows Honest John Vane to escape "the ponderous didacticism of the novel of purpose."[21]

In spite of its apparent flaws, then, I believe that Honest John Vane does achieve a significant degree of success as a political satire. This is because De Forest worked well as both a social fabulist and a novelist of manners within the limitations of allegory and caricature he imposed on himself. I will, therefore, show that Honest John Vane is predominantly a clever and satisfying social fable. Secondly, I will show that this fable is enhanced by means of a satiric presentation of manners which broadens De Forest's attack to make it include American vulgarity. I will demonstrate that De Forest organizes this satiric display of manners into a pattern of social ascent and concomitant moral decline which complements the thesis of the social fable by providing social explanations for the immoral political conduct illustrated by the fable. In this way, I hope to show that _Honest John Vane_ is further evidence of De Forest's literary importance for it deserves the praise Howells gave it when he said, "In this country, at least, there has never been so good a political satire as this."[22]

De Forest illustrates the dangers of electing unqualified men and the dangers of special legislation by means of a social fable which explains the corrupt political career of John Vane in terms of a clear allegory. The social fable follows the same pattern De Forest attributes to Simon Sharp's testimony:

> It was a new and perversely reversed and altogether bedevilled rendering of the _Pilgrim's Progress_ into American politics; it was much as if Bunyan had at last pitched _his_ Christian and Hopeful into the little lurid hole which led from the gate of Zion to the pit. Nothing could well be more subverting and confounding and debilitating to the moral sense, unless it might be to see silver Demas and filthy Muckrake welcomed by the shining ones into the Holy City (224).

Because the social fable follows the pattern of a "bedevilled" rendering of Bunyan, one cannot expect it to correspond to Bunyan's allegory precisely. The only critic who has pursued De Forest's hint, Joseph Rubin, therefore resists the temptation of "forcing the novel into a false, rigid analogy."[23] Additions can be made to his list of analogies, however, and these would reveal the allegorical pattern more clearly.

It should first be noted that De Forest's pilgrim is a somewhat "bedevilled" version of Bunyan's.[24] Honest John is not a Christian but a celebrated American type, "one of those heroes of industry and conquerers of circumstance known as self-made men" (69). He is, however, decidedly unheroic. De Forest calls him "altogether an uncommonly fine animal" and notes that only "the fastidiously aristocratic and the microscopically cultivated" are able to see his true nature and are able to hint "that Vane's beauty was purely physical, and had no moral or intellectual significance" (70). Repeatedly he insists on the poverty of Vane's mind and the flabbiness of his moral nature. Unlike Bunyan's Christian, Vane does not seek wise and moral teachers. He prefers, instead, to be a "self-taught statesman" and his political views are, therefore, "the offspring of ignorance, or at best of half knowledge" (91). Intellectually, then, Vane displays an "Eden-like nakedness and innocence" (92). De Forest's phrase here is related to a series of religious terms found throughout the novel and foreshadows a Fall from Innocence to Experience.

Like Bunyan's pilgrim, De Forest's possesses a symbolic name. His title, "Honest John," is, initially, an accurate one. The deed which earned it, the refusal of a small bribe, is, however, not really of sufficient magnitude to warrant such a lofty title: "Only one hundred in greenbacks (about ninety in gold) out of pocket, and the days of Washington come again! I should suppose that, for say twice the figure, a legislator of the period might get the title of 'Father of his Country'" (95). Eventually, this title becomes "perversely reversed" because Honest John does not possess "moral sympathy enough to feel the beauty of virtue in the individual, nor intellect enough to discover the necessity of virtue to the prosperity of society" (188). De Forest thus stresses the vulgarity of Vane's moral nature: "There is a rabble in morals as well as manners, and to this spiritual mobocracy Vane belonged by birth" (170). Honest John becomes, in reality, Dishonest John, yet he still retains his original title. This fact delights Vane because he desires fame. His surname, therefore, accurately symbolizes his central quality: Honest John is incredibly vain.

Vane's pilgrimage, which is reversed in direction from that of Bunyan's Christian, begins when he answers the call of Darius Dorman to attend a nominating convention. As Rubin suggests, Dorman is not Evangelist but De Forest's equivalent of the "foul fiend," Appolyon.[25] De Forest strongly implies that Dorman is the doorman to Hell when he calls him "the Mephistopheles of the lobby" (168). De Forest's descriptions reinforce this idea for Dorman is described as sooty and as possibly having hooves and a tail. Furthermore, Dorman is given an idiosyncratic manner of profanity that depends upon expressions like "'for the Devil's sake'" (126) and "'by Beezlebub'" (131).

Vane is nominated because Dorman's machinations have predetermined the result. Once elected, Vane journeys to Washington, which serves as a symbol of many of the places Bunyan's pilgrim passed through. He expects it to be the Delectable Mountains of high society (109), but it is, first of all, a Valley of Humiliation. Vane's wife objects to their rooms and demands something more obviously a House Beautiful. Providing her with luxuries drains his finances until he is reduced to the humiliation of overhearing a milkman and a negro discussing publically his debts. Vane also becomes mired in the Slough of Despond when he senses that he is not rising in the political world: "his self-conceit was sapped by debt and by the sense of legislative failure" (171). Vane thus becomes a victim of Dorman's temptations. Now, as Rubin says, he makes "profitable excursions to the Valley of Ease where the silver mines are accessible."[26] After taking money from the Subfluvial promoters, that is, he becomes "a model of stolid and immoral content" (183).

Washington is also a Vanity Fair for Vane. Unlike other politicians, he demands only ten per cent of each swindle he undertakes to promote, and he thus maintains his vanity by preserving his perversely reversed title:

> It is needless to say that, in view of this conscientious moderation, the lobby itself was stricken with a sense of unholy gratitude, and began to shout through its organs, 'Hurrah for Honest John Vane!' You may imagine how it delighted and strengthened him to find that, no matter what villainous trick he played upon the public, he could not lose his glorious nickname (187).

Finally, Washington seems to Vane to be a Celestial City because it provides him with the wealth and fame he desires. In moral terms, however, it is clear that Vane has actually travelled in the opposite direction. He is definitely and completely a "moral failure" (197) who has actually taken residence in the City of Destruction. Unlike Christian, who was improved by his pilgrimage, then, Vane is made evil. He is transformed into a man who appears, when arguing with Dorman, to be like "Satan rebuking Sin" (184). He has not joined himself with Heaven but with "the communion of Satan" (196). His ultimate fate is suggested by the diabolical Dorman who tells him, "'We are friends, John, forever,' . . . with a peculiar accent on the last word" (212).

The reversed pilgrimage here is not only a "bedevilled" version of the Pilgrim's Progress, it is also a clever presentation, in political terms, of the stages of Puritan salvation which Bunyan illustrates in his allegory. Like Christian, Vane is one of the "elect," not in the political but in the moral sense. He belongs, as I noted earlier, "by birth" to the "rabble in morals." For this reason he is predestined by Dorman to his fate. Dorman's invitation for him to come to the nominating convention is, thus, the exact parallel of the Puritan stage of "vocation." After he answers the call, as the elect always do, Vane is prepared for the next stage in the Puritan schema of salvation. He is not strengthened in virtue, however, but befouled by corruption. Like the Puritan, however, he too undergoes an experience of "justification" which allows him to remove his burden of guilt. In this case, it is his fantastic justification of his corrupt conduct before the Congressional committee. Acquitted of guilt, Vane is now ready for "sanctification," the process of strengthening a man in the ways of the elect. This occurs with his reelection to Congress. His good name still intact, Vane is now able to return to political life and to engage in more corrupt schemes. All of Vane's behaviour results in an earthly "glorification." In moral terms, however, he does not enter a stage of heavenly bliss, as does Christian after crossing the River of Death. Instead, as Dorman's speech demonstrates, he has earned damnation.

This reversed pattern of Puritan salvation, which indicates the depravity of politicians, is reinforced by a reference to the Faust legend. In his dealings with Dorman, "the Mephistopheles of the lobby," Vane proves to be a "simple Faust" (168). His career is thus that of a man who decides to "sell his soul for at least what little it was worth" (171). De Forest also uses religious terms to show that politics has degenerated into something like a false religion because it inspires worship of Mammon. True religion and politics, as Dorman points out, are incompatible in Washington (133). Vane, then, begins as something of a saint but, once he is in Washington, he is bested by goblins (137). Like a saint, he is changed by experience for he undergoes "a transfiguration, though not such a one as apostles would desire to honor with tabernacles" (177). Vane, that is, commits himself to "the Mammonite crew" (183) and his political success illustrates that "the golden calf of lobbydom" is "the directing deity of our politics" (190).

De Forest's social fable, then, is tightly and cleverly structured as a kind of political allegory. Vane is obviously a conceptual agent, the embodiment of the common man who does not possess enough intellectual and moral stamina to be a wholesome political force. Dorman represents the opportunists waiting to manipulate such incompetents by showing them how to turn the legislative process into a plundering party. The process of moral degeneration, presented through the reversed scheme of salvation, clearly illustrates the need for political reforms, beginning with a reform of the electorate itself. The social fable, that is, deflates the myth of the self-made man which permits Vane to be elected in the first place. The discredited Greatheart notes that moral survival in Congress requires extraordinary qualities and that "'no man ought to run for Congress who is not a Croesus or a Cato'" (216). Vane has neither wealth nor wisdom. These two limitations make him a perfect tool of the lobby.

By means of his presentation of Vane's career, then, De Forest illustrates that the desire of voters to to have "'plain people . . . become honorables'" (78) is misdirected. Vane is so common--he comes "of low genus" (180)--that his breeding and education provide "no sound self-respect and lofty sense of honor" (180). Vane possesses only "the little, combustible block-house of vanity" (181). He succumbs to temptation because he needs a "fortress," "that noble pride which renders unassailable the integrity of a Washington, a Calhoun, an Adams, or a Sumner" (181).

De Forest's social fable thus demonstrates an aristocratic bias, similar to that of Cooper and Brackenridge, because it illustrates a belief that an excessive democratic zeal has led to a rejection of the best men, true "honorables" and gentlemen like Saltonstall. In the conclusion of his social fable De Forest even questions the value of the democratic process. Thus, in talking about the results of the investigation into corruption, he says,

> The rest we mainly know; the whole alien world of monarchies, empires, and despotisms knows it; the capacity of republicanism for honest government is everywhere being judged by it. In every civilized land on this planet, thoughtful souls are seeking to divine, by the light of these and other similar dolorous revelations, whether it is possible for a democracy to save itself from the corrupting tyranny of capital. Within our own borders sadder spirits are asking which is the most alluring spectacle--a free America falling into squandering and bribery, or a monarchical Prussia ruled by economy and honesty (223).

De Forest did not here actually reject democracy. He included a small note of hope in his affirmation that "The vast, industrious, decent American public, which wire-pullers usually regard as having no more intelligence or moral principle than one of the forces of nature, showed unmistakably that it possessed much political virtue and some political sense" (223). Rubin says that missing this affirmation was "the most flagrant error of reviewers,"[27] but it is equally possible to lay too much stress on it. The concern of the public leads to an investigation. The public response to it, however, supports what Dilworthy asserts in The Gilded Age:

> 'The great public is weak-minded; the great public is sentimental; the great public always turns around and weeps for an odious murderer, and prays for him, and carries flowers to his prison and besieges the governor with appeals to his clemency, as soon as the papers begin to howl for the man's blood.--In a word, the great putty-hearted public loves to "gush." . . .'[28]

James F. Light is basically right in seeing this public as "the real villain of Honest John Vane"[29] for it lets Vane escape without punishment. De Forest, in fact, castigates it in terms similar to those used by Dilworthy:

> But the public,--the great, soft-hearted American public,--that public which has compassion on every species of scoundrel,--which tries murderers under jury restrictions warranted to save four-fifths of them,--which cannot see one condemned to death without pleading with tears for his noxious life,--that forgiving, milk-and-water public was as mild in its judgment as the committee. It magnified our dishonorable member for not lying, and exalted his name for not committing perjury. What a pity, said this lamblike public which was so bent on getting itself fleeced to the skin,--what a pity that our other shepherds could not have used the shears with a steadier hand and avoided snipping off their own fingers! In contrast to these unlucky and somewhat ridiculous bunglers, what a straightforward, workmanlike, admirable creature was 'Honest John Vane' (227-28).

De Forest's indictments at the end of the book are fully justified by the narrative. The social fable of Honest John Vane successfully employs the pattern of a "bedevilled" Pilgrim's Progress to illustrate De Forest's belief that, in Bergmann's words, America "was following the wrong road, that it was walking the road not to salvation but to perdition."[30] De Forest, therefore, becomes Evangelist in his final sentence. He points out the possible doom and tells what America must do to be saved: "Nothing in the future is more certain than that, if this huge 'special legislation' machine for bribery is not broken up, our Congress will surely and quickly become, what some sad souls claim that it already is, a den of thieves" (232).

Although the satiric social fable employs caricatures as conceptual agents, Honest John Vane is not, as Jay Martin charges, "a bloodless morality play in which evil triumphs."[31] De Forest's conceptual agents do not have the cut-and-dried quality of allegorical embodiments. Their significance, that is, cannot be separated totally from their concrete form. His central characters, especially, do have pulses and they are comically alive as representatives of the Jacksonian social scene.

De Forest provides the transfusions which animate his conceptual agents by concise and often comic sketches of manners. Simon Sharp, for example, is in the fable a False Evangelist[32] for he declares to Vane that "'Special legislation is the great field for what I call Congressional *usefulness*'" (123). De Forest, however, graphically presents him as an overly-polished hypocrite who is slightly embarrassed by the necessity of mentioning the nature of his immoral schemes to Vane:

> Our member noted with some surprise that his famous and puissant visitor had a singularly soft, ingratiating, obsequious, nay, even sycophantic utterance, and that his manner was not only deferential, but slightly anxious and nervous and embarrassed, as if he were a needy tradesman eager to propitiate a difficult customer. Moreover, he was unctuously and little less than stickily profuse in compliments, pouring them forth with a liberality which reminded one of oil dripping from a castor-bean press (116-17).

De Forest then goes on to give numerous examples of the "lubricating common-places" (117) which mark Sharp as a sycophantic hypocrite.

It is the central characters, John and his wife, however, who have the most vigour. Howells felt that they were "presented with the sharpness and depth of delineation which one finds in all of Mr. De Forest's best work, and which is peculiar to him."[33] There is some exaggeration here for neither character is as completely developed as, to cite two of De Forest's best portraits, Colonel Carter or Mrs. Larue. But there is also an equal amount of truth. Vane himself has a personality as a corpulent, well-intentioned, lout. Since he is the focus of so much attention and is built up through an accumulation of small touches and dialogue, it is rather difficult to point to specific places in the text which might serve as prime examples of this personality. In his early career, however, he is presented as half pathetic and totally comical in his eagerness to display his political acumen. For example, he is uncomfortable about being alone with Olympia in her parlour because she has previously rejected his proposal of marriage, but becomes expansive when the wily Olympia makes a direct appeal to his vanity by asking him about his political plans:

> John Vane at once lost his embarrassment and found that this was indeed the land of free speech. He had a fluent utterance, as we have already indicated, and on this occasion he beat his best time on the platform. He told all that he knew about national politics, and some things which neither he nor any other man ever knew (105).

On another occasion he shows by a simple gesture that he has a moral nature as vulgar as his social nature. This occurs when he finds himself in financial difficulty and mentions to Cavendish that other Congressmen find a solution to similar problems through special legislation:

> This last phrase he added with a ready, commonplace wink which was habitual with him, and suggestive of character. It revealed that, while he disapproved of the briberies and corruptions of the lobby, he did not recoil from them with the disgust of a morally refined soul, and saw in them as much that was humorous as hideous (157).

After Vane becomes actively corrupt, De Forest notes that "the slow, loutish guile which lies at the bottom of so many low-bred and seemingly simple natures" (177) surfaces and he presents Vane as displaying a coarse cunning when he demands the full amount of dividends on his stock from Dorman and when he makes his speech of justification before the committee.

Much of Vane's character is presented through De Forest's depiction of Vane's rather turbulent relationship with his wife. Vane here seems to be not only a low-bred man but also something of a hen-pecked husband. He desperately struggles to restrain his wife's extravagance, but he repeatedly gives in to her until she drives him so far in debt that only corruption can save him. In this way, De Forest gives Vane's corruption psychological and social probability for it is seen as the product of an attempt to hold and to satisfy the desires of a beautiful, selfish, social-climbing wife.

De Forest organizes his presentation of Olympia Smiles Vane and her relationship with her husband to complement the pattern of the social fable by making it serve as another indication of the way in which the common man's desire to be an "honorable" is leading the country to ruin. His presentation, that is, illustrates the thesis of "Two Girls," an essay in which he attacked the modern woman's materialism: "Yes, the American girl's profusion is only a part of the national profusion; it is only one of the various ways in which democracy seeks to level upward; it is mediocrity striving to be as fine as wealth." As Frank Bergmann says, De Forest compares Olympia, who is like the essay's "girl of today," with her noble and resourceful mother.[35] Mrs. Smiles is "a relic of the time when ladies were not mere dandies" (73) and she works hard to support her family. Olympia is a "'girl of the period,' that fairest and greediest of all vampires" (113), and is only concerned with material luxuries. Just as the election of Vane indicates a decline from the days when gentlemen controlled politics, the behaviour of Olympia indicates a social decline for De Forest compares her with her mother and finds Mrs. Smiles to be "industrially and morally . . . worth six of her" (74).

De Forest clearly portrays Olympia as a case of "mediocrity striving to be as fine as wealth." Although the daughter of Vane's landlady, Olympia has known better days and affects an aristocratic air. She rejects Vane's first proposal because she finds him "'so common'" (71). De Forest, however, indicates that although Olympia has "an unmistakable air of fashionable breeding and boarding-school finish" (68), she is "not a soul of the last and most painful finish" (70). She really does not have any moral depth and much of her finish is the result of the fact that she has been "polished by long-continued friction against undergraduate pundits" (70). When Vane is elected to Congress, therefore, this "veteran flirt, trained to tough coquetry in many a desperate skirmish" (68), no longer finds him to be so vulgar. She turns her charms on him and gets him to propose again because she senses that he can provide an escape for her from the mundane world of her mother's boarding house.

De Forest indicates briefly, but effectively, how

Olympia's snobbishness, her refusal to accept the social conditions of the common man, pushes Honest John from his shaky perch of virtue. He presents her as a woman unwilling to settle for anything less than her wildest, greediest dreams. From the beginning she makes the marriage less than totally blissful for she expresses her dismay that they have to live in dingy rooms where the elaborate entertainments she has envisioned are impossible. Habitually, she demands better surroundings and exacts luxuries from her husband by a cunning combination of tears and complaints which directly attack his vanity. Her husband's comparatively small concessions, however, do not satisfy her: "Her desire was that her husband should take the political leadership which belonged to him, and, what was of course much more important, should give her the fashionable eminence which belonged to her" (138). Finding her husband lax in the performance of this duty, she tries a pathetic direct assault on the world of high society:

> Spurred by her eager desire to commune with the ultra genteel, she committed the imprudence of attending one senatorial party without an invitation, and was treated with such undisguised *hauteur* by the hostess that she went bedridden with mortification for three days (139).

After this, Olympia learns that she can only receive social attention, especially that of men, if her husband has the power to confer favours. De Forest indicates that she is "moved by her habitual reverence for society" to meet it on its own terms and to win "its homage by a show of that wealth and power which it demanded" (140).

De Forest presents Olympia as now intensifying her compaign for social status in her typical manner. He describes, for example, one instance of "the old, stale discussion over the expense of such a route to glory" which ends with one of Olympia's customary displays of pique: "Thereupon Olympia cried harrassingly for an hour or more, and sulked in silence for a day to two" (140). He shows that her frustrated wishes transform her into a termagant as she begins "to interest herself disagreeably in her husband's Congressional doings, and to rub peppery remarks into him concerning his obligation to be eloquent, able, managing, and, in short, successful" (142). Such repeated assaults do little good at first except to make the marriage irritating for John, as De Forest indicates by means of one of his many startling and comic images: "In these days, Olympia was both sore and prickly with a consciousness of her husband's incapacity; she was as uncomfortable and as discomforting as a porcupine might be whose quills should be sharp at both ends" (145). With each assault, however, Olympia gets a little more of what she wants. She obtains a house and gives parties. She remains heedless of her husband's repeated remonstrances that she is plunging him into debt. Soon she acquires the rather scandalous "patrician intimacy" (146) of Senator Ironman, an aging Lothario who escorts her to many important social events. Finally, having gained entry to opulent society, Olympia becomes even more disatisfied with her lot because she is envious of the luxuries which the wives of corrupt Congressmen have. This signals Vane's moral doom for her desire to make the marriage one of convenience, for herself if not John, drives her husband right into the diabolical arms of the lobbyist, Dorman.

De Forest, then, employs Olympia as a type of the social climber. He clearly establishes that her selfish concern for material aggrandizement forms the heart of her relationship with John:

> Her world was very different from her husband's world, and she did not much care to have him take an interest in hers, nor did she want at all to worry about his. That the two spheres had any intimate connection she could rarely perceive, except when the masculine one ceased to radiate gold upon the feminine one (199).

She is a total failure as a wife because she lacks the moral concern and the loving devotion which her mother tells her a wife could employ to make John acceptable in any social circle. Olympia does succeed in attaining the "social eminence" she feels belongs to her and John does succeed, for that reason, in making the marriage run smoothly. The cost, however, is enormous. Their social prestige is merely a gilding over tarnished moral natures.

De Forest's brief presentation of Olympia fully deserves Howells's praise: "she is to be added to that line of women in the painting of whom Mr. De Forest--never weak in the presentation of character--would be recognized by a more discerning public than ours, as having shown the skill and force of a master."[36] The "skill and force" here are not only demonstrated by the fact that he brings her alive as a social climber, but also by the fact that he organizes a presentation of her vulgarity to complement the thesis of the social fable. The social ascent and concomitant moral decline of the Vanes obviously is a domestic equivalent of the reversed Pilgrim's Progress which is illustrated by Honest John's political career. De Forest's portrait of Olympia indicates a belief that American social values are as "bedevilled" as American political values. Her conduct shows that the democrat's desire to become the elite finds expression in an aping of the superficial signs of social status. The inordinate concern to acquire the material advantages of "honorables," he implies, has led to a neglect of the moral qualities which must be cultivated if America is to be a nation of true ladies and gentlemen of democracy. What is needed to save democracy, De Forest suggests, is a return to the values of Washington in the political world and a return to the values of Mrs. Smiles in the domestic world.

The caustic display of manners is of just sufficient magnitude to root the characters in the real world without destroying the allegorical pattern of the social fable. The compatibility of the two gives Honest John Vane a unity which Light calls "far superior to the shotgun blasts of The Gilded Age."[37] In addition, the novel is written in an outstanding comical style for, as Gargano says, "There is hardly a page in Honest John Vane that does not contain quotable and pungent phrases, full of vivacity, grim humor, and imagination."[38] Honest John Vane is, therefore, far from being the bloodless morality play Martin calls it. It is, instead, a vigorous and scathing sketch of an age of fools and rascals, an age which celebrates mediocrity because of principles and thereby destroys all principles. Time has not dimmed the vigour of its pages and recent history testifies that De Forest's vision of American political life is still fresh. Honest John Vane deserves wider recognition as what Arthur Gordon Quinn called it, "one of the best political novels in [American] fiction."[39]

III

Playing the Mischief traces the adventures of a beautiful, clever, and completely unscrupulous woman, Josie Murray, who presses through Congress a claim for damages, amounting to one hundred thousands of dollars, for a barn burnt during the War of 1812 and already paid for once. Since it deals with a vivacious woman claimant, it is inevitably compared with The Gilded Age. A reviewer for Appleton's first made this comparison in 1875 and said that Playing the Mischief "was suggested by 'The Gilded Age,' and, after reading it, we are inclined to share the author's conviction that he could use the same materials to better advantage than they had been put to by Messrs. Twain and Warner."[40] I also believe that Playing the

Mischief is the superior literary production. It is not my intention, however, to support this claim by means of a comparison of the two novels. My interest is in drawing attention to De Forest's work. The Gilded Age is already well known and has been widely discussed while the fate of Playing the Mischief has been summarized by Light: "even today the novel has not received the critical praise that is its due."[41] My purpose here, then, is to provide some of this long-overdue critical praise by demonstrating, first, that Playing the Mischief is organized as a social fable and, secondly, that it is successfully presented as a novel of manners by means of a full gallery of realized characters.

As he did in Miss Ravenel's Conversion and in much of Kate Beaumont, De Forest created a social fable in Playing the Mischief through the procedures of the novelist of manners. De Forest's comedy of manners, that is, is successfully organized to illustrate a social thesis. Playing the Mischief, however, has more unity than either of these novels. In Miss Ravenel's Conversion, for example, De Forest's elaborate plot required him to illustrate Lillie's biography by means of sketches of other characters to such a degree that Lillie was often not present or of secondary interest for long periods. In Playing the Mischief, in contrast, De Forest presents a large gallery of political and social figures yet he maintains his focus sharply on Josie Murray. The result, I believe, is that Playing the

Mischief is De Forest's most successful novel and deserves critical praise not just as an example of political fiction but as a rich and vivid portrait of a society succumbing to decadence and vulgarity.

The social fable of Playing the Mischief depends upon the pattern of Josie Murray's moral, social, and political education. It is carefully organized to present a conflict between two groups who represent opposing sets of values,[42] those of the old-school gentlemen and those of the contemporary opportunists. The novel, then, traces Josie's movements back and forth between the two groups. From representatives of the first, Josie learns the traditional morality and integrity of the true gentleman of democracy. From those of the second, she learns the immoral mechanics of modern politics. She must make a choice between them because the two are absolutely incompatible. By tracing Josie's movements between the two camps and by dramatizing her decision to side with the opportunistic politicians, De Forest illustrates his belief that American democracy has rejected the spiritual values of the past and replaced them with an immoral materialism.

As a conceptual agent, Josie is very similar to Olympia Vane. She is sarcastically described as "a fragile and sensitive child of lazy luxury, the fine lady of this century" (161). She is, then, as E. R. Hagemann observes, "the nation in the 1870's. Josie is democracy."[43] She is a democracy which lacks high political and moral ideals, however, for she is motivated by the goals of a debased dream, a dream of material accumulation and display, a dream in which the democrat seeks to ape the idle aristocrat. She reveals this dream to Mrs. Warden, another materialist, when she learns that Hollowbread, one of the men she charms into helping her press her claim, remains in Congress even though he is wealthy:

> 'If I were a rich man, I would never do a stitch of work. . . . I would spend my money; I would have a palatial residence; I would give dinners and parties; I would take the lead in society; I would swing between New York and Europe' (90).

Following this declaration, she lovingly catalogues the expensive appointments of New York residences in a scene which brilliantly paints the gaudiness of the Gilded Age. Josie, in this way, demonstrates a complete "satisfaction in mere outlay:" "It was the cost, the expenditure, the ostentatious extravagance, which made Josie Murray smack her lips, so to speak, as she discoursed of New York grandeur" (93). Josie, then, clearly represents a democracy envious of the trappings of the gentleman but negligent of the necessary social duties which, as Cady pointed out, were an essential part of the traditional gentlemanly configuration.

The traditional values of the gentlemanly configuration are represented by Josie's relatives, the Murrays, and by Edgar Bradford and Belle Warden. The most important member of this group is Colonel Murray. Like Dr. Ravenel and Colonel Kershaw, he is De Forest's model of propriety in manners and morals./ As Bradford writes, Colonel Murray is "'one of the soundest-headed and purest-hearted men alive, the perfect model of an old soldier, an officer, and a gentleman'" (171). He is "a venerable and entirely sane Don Quixote" (97) in more than appearance, for he wages a losing battle to maintain public decency. He demands integrity in all public dealings because honesty is the eleventh commandment of a "soldier's religion" (275). Such gentlemanly concepts are out-dated because, as De Forest showed in Honest John Vane, the new breed of politicians, who support special appropriations, have a different religion and they follow their own "cardinal eleventh commandment, 'Thou shalt not be found out.'"[44] De Forest, therefore, employs Colonel Murray to express his dissatisfaction with the state of American democracy. Colonel Murray becomes so upset with the corruption of Jacksonian democrats that he compares democracy unfavourably with oligarchy. He sees that the training of gentlemen makes them fitter to govern a nation and implies that not only an acceptance of oligarchy, but also the abandonment of the American ideal of the separation of Church and State, would result in better government: "'We have been helped, John, by our circumstances. We belong to honorable professions. I often think that matters could not have gone very badly in those old-time societies which were ruled by soldiers and priests'" (332).

The Colonel's most important followers are Edgar

Bradford and Belle Warden, both of whom typify the possibility of integrity in the modern world. Edgar Bradford is a man who has served honourably in the army and, like the Colonel, possesses a soldier's disgust for lying and cheating. In spite of certain personal limitations, he behaves with absolute integrity in all his duties as a Congressman. In his campaign to restore integrity to government, by abolishing avenues of corruption, he is very much a modern version of the Colonel, a fact emphasized by the corrupt Drummond who calls him "'a bit of a Don Quixote'" because "'He has impractical ideas--for a man in politics'" (160). Just as Bradford demonstrates that a real gentleman can maintain honour in political life, Belle Warden illustrates that a true lady requires not wealth but integrity. Belle is a poor girl, but Bradford describes her as "'chivalrous'" (120) and the Colonel as "'a noble girl'" who is "'an officer and a gentleman'" (276). Such masculine terms indicate a certain stiffness in Belle as an individual, but they clearly suggest that this girl, who tries to discourage the claim-hunting of Josie and Mrs. Warden, is also a type embodying ideas of gentlemanly honour which a rapacious public would do well to emulate.

From the beginning, Josie displays more interest in learning the mechanics of political jobbery, by means of which she can achieve wealth and higher social status, than the lessons of responsible citizenship which the members of the old order can teach her. She therefore associates herself with men who have none of the ideals of the Colonel or Bradford. In the novel's very first scene, for instance, she begins her education by deliberately flirting with Congressman Hollowbread in order to interest him in her fraudulent claim. She succeeds to the extent that he provides her with some understanding of the legislative process and this leads her to seek the aid of men more actively corrupt. Thus, she enlists the aid of Sykes Drummond who typifies the brazen corruption of Jacksonian politicians. She also seeks out General Bangs, a power-hungry politician who represents a decline from the old-order officer like the Colonel and Bradford, not only because he is a cheat and an hypocrite, but also because he uses his fabricated reputation as a military man to serve selfish ends rather than to aid the public. Finally, she hires Jacob Pike, a representative of the lobby, who specializes in making the legislative machinery serve as a pump from the Treasury to the pockets of his clients. Similarly, she also associates with women--like the elderly claimant, Mrs. Warden, and the beneficiaries of corruption, Senator Ironman's wife and Mrs. John Vane--who, unlike the true lady, Belle, are motivated entirely by a lust for social display.

Josie's respect for wealth, then, makes her immune to the lessons of the old order. She appreciates the status the honourable reputation of the Murrays can give her, but she understands that even greater status, as well as a freedom to indulge in wanton display, can come from joining forces with the political jobbers. She therefore deceives the Murrays, with whom she lives. She takes advantage of the protection of their reputation and, after each of their lessons in responsible conduct, goes out and engages in her corrupt machinations. Their discovery of her hypocrisy leads to overt conflict between the two groups. The representatives of the old order desperately try to stop Josie and her corrupt friends, but they are bested because the corruption is too wide-spread and too commonly accepted.

By means of Josie's biography, then, De Forest illustrates two related points. First, he illustrates the need for correcting a particular social abuse. The success of Josie's schemes clearly shows, as Bradford says, that, "'As long as men have the power to rob the public treasury, they can be coaxed or bribed to rob it'" (409). This is the same point illustrated by Honest John Vane's career. In fact, Bradford's speech pointing out the dangers facing America, which is made before a deliberately inattentive Congress, is reminiscent of the concluding paragraphs of Honest John Vane:

> 'Congressional legislation will soon be a synonym for corruption, not only throughout this country, but throughout the world. If we do not wish to see republican institutions discredited; if we do not wish to see their spread arrested, and perhaps turned to collapse; if we do not wish to see the industrial prosperity of our native land impeded and stumbled, we

> must proceed at once to combat this extravagant, unjust, and dishonest wastefulness; we must check it, we must extirpate it, we must render it impossible' (409).

Secondly, De Forest's focus on Josie places the blame much more strenuously on the public than did his focus on Vane's political career. As the representative of the democracy of the 1870's, Josie manifests an infectious materialism. She is an example of "mediocrity striving to be as fine as wealth." She is a "mediocrity" not because she lacks talent--she has an abundance of it--but because her materialism is a disease which sickens and kills the moral reason which is necessary if wealth is not to prove itself a source of moral evil.

Josie's story is, thus, like John Vane's, one of a social ascent and concomitant moral decline. She is, in fact, very similar to him as an agent in the social fable. Josie's idea of morality is no deeper than Vane's. Vane has only "simian instincts of good."[45] The structure of Playing the Mischief successfully illustrates, through its presentation of the havoc Josie creates, that she is "sadly controlled by that love of peril, and that monkey-like desire to be a danger and a mischief to others which we have expressed by saying that she was 'possessed'" (192).[46] Two things are striking about this declaration and suggest its connection to the social fable in Honest John Vane. The first is the suggestion that Josie is, like Vane, an evolutionary throwback in moral terms. Both Bradford and Colonel Murray note that Josie is not malignant, just instinctively selfish. Bradford uses the monkey analogy:

> 'A monkey who sees another monkey about to seize a cocoa-nut might push him off the branch and break his neck, without hard feeling as well as without compunction, and thinking of nothing but the cocoa-nut. That, I take it, is just Josie Murray' (417).

In spite of her better social circumstances, then, Josie appears morally to be just as much of a "low genus" as Honest John. De Forest seems to suggest in Playing the Mischief that Josie, who is the public, needs control so that, if she cannot be made to evolve into a morally responsible adult, she can, at least, be trained to behave more honourably and less destructively.

The second thing which connects this fable to that in Honest John Vane is the use of the terms "mischief" and "possessed." Mischief is a colloquial euphemism for "devil." De Forest is, by employing this term, suggesting that the hand of Satan is behind corruption, in much the same way that he did in Honest John Vane and his shorter fables. Possession in this fable is much more metaphorical than in the other ones. The evil spirit in this novel is not an actual Satan but a greedy materialism that possesses Josie.[47] Her possession is so complete that she is transformed, and De Forest repeatedly describes her as a witch. She is, for example, called a "little witch " (128) and an "even-tempered little witch" (236). She is also described as displaying "the witchery of wantoning womanhood" (284) and as having "witchery" (151) in her eyes. Her effect on others, however, is the same as that Satan has. Congressman Hollowbread, in particular, is "bewitched" (146) by Josie. In her presence it seems to him "as if there were no distinction between right and wrong, between honor and disgrace" (272). He is so infatuated by her that De Forest says that, "With Mrs. Murray's arm in his, he would have quitted Paradise and eloped to the infernal regions" (290).

Josie is as heartless with everyone as she is with Hollowbread and she is condemned in the social fable because of the destructive consequences of her single-minded dedication to material prosperity. She manipulates members from both camps and casts them off when she no longer needs them. The novel is, as I have said, carefully structured. It shows that she is what Colonel Murray calls her, "'an incarnation of misapplied ability'" (332). Although she could have accomplished much of worth, her lack of principles reduces her to merely "a greedy ornament of society" (183). Through this devilish example of a type of the "girl of the period," then, De Forest condemns an age which has abandoned its commitment to moral standards and to the principle of industry, which he celebrated in Miss Ravenel's Conversion, and instead taken up the black art of Jacksonian manipulation.

The illustration, I believe, is satisfying throughout, even in the last scene in which Josie, now wealthy because of the successful prosecution of her claim, enters the house of Allchin who has assembled a group which plans to rob her of all her ill-gotten lucre. James F. Light, in criticizing Edmund Wilson's contention that this final scene is a sign of De Forest's dramatic weakness, says that De Forest was wise in not dramatizing Josie's ultimate destruction.[48] He goes on, however, to say that De Forest "would have been even wiser to have ignored the moral convictions of his Victorian audience entirely and to have allowed Josephine, without the shadow of poetic justice hanging over her, to exult in her spoils."[49] Light has here, I believe, also made a mistake because he has not realized the subtle way this ending contributes to De Forest's social criticism. Josie's implied defeat is retributive justice only in a very narrow way. Certainly, as the central figure in the biography of an immoral individual, Josie will suffer retribution. De Forest, however, makes it abundantly clear that this is not in any sense a triumph of justice and morality. This ending is more properly regarded as De Forest's final illustration of evil in his social fable. It marks, in this sense, a return to his condemnation of greedy capitalists in Honest John Vane. The final scene is something of a beast fable in itself. Josie appears as "a goose worth picking" and Allchin as an "'old hyena'" (445) ready to tear off her Treasury-fatted flesh. This conclusion to the social fable makes Playing the Mischief an indictment, not only of a greedy and misguided public, but of the capitalists who benefit extravagantly from public corruption. It makes Playing the Mischief an indictment of an entire society.

What makes Playing the Mischief satisfying is that the social fable which makes this indictment is not obtrusive and cumbrously didactic. De Forest's talents as a novelist of manners, which are nowhere better displayed, prevent this. As Light testifies, the novel is "composed in scenes which fully and dramatically explore national morals and manners."[50] Rubin similarly praises Playing the Mischief because it is "staged . . . in at least fifty scenes placed in dimensional settings."[51] In these scenes the conceptual agent is subordinated to the character. De Forest creates a gallery of full-length portraits, among which are the most vivid and memorable he ever produced. Playing the Mischief effectively illustrates De Forest's ideas, but De Forest's skill in painting character makes it seem not a thesis novel but a dynamic panorama of a society in which a tide of vulgarity in manners and morals is overwhelming the last vestiges of gentlemanly decency.

One of the weaknesses in most of De Forest's novels is his failure to bring alive the representatives of virtue. In Playing the Mischief such characters are not brilliantly portrayed, but De Forest did make pains to give at least some of them a complexity or colour which prevents them from being pale embodiments of concepts. The Reverend John Murray, for example, operates as a voice of the old order in his lectures to Josie and his advocacy of moral standards. De Forest's depiction of his manners, however, brings him alive as an old-fashioned and fundamentalist preacher whose dedication to his older and ailing wife has caused him to squander his intellectual gifts. He habitually engages in heated debates with his brother over the theory of evolution and the reality of the devil. De Forest dramatizes him as a man who pampers his wife to such an extent that he violates his own rules of propriety and becomes a bit of an hypocrite. He shows, that is, that Reverend Murray becomes addicted to the gossip he condemns because he reads with relish, and later conceals from Josie, a copy of the Newsmonger each morning. De Forest's presentation of Reverend Murray as something of an eccentric makes him a comic butt. It does not, however, negate his function in the social fable. De Forest also dramatizes the fact that Reverend Murray does have a stern moral sense and a dedication to the concept of honour which is admirable. Reverend Murray displays "the delicate good sense of a gentleman" (327) in everything but his debates and his treatment of his wife. After his wife's collapse, therefore, he no longer seems a comic eccentric. At the end, he is a grief-stricken and nearly insane man who, like Josie, is a graphic "'incarnation of misapplied ability.'"

De Forest brings Colonel Murray alive as everything his brother is not. He is a totally rational and energetic man who displays by means of his intellectual enthusiasms the fact that he is "'up to my eyes in new ideas all the while'" (104). In spite of his stern military code of honour, he has tact in dealing with others and, although he has "an air of self-possession which was nothing less than patrician," he has "little ways of putting himself at ease which were unceremonious as old slippers" (97). Colonel Murray possesses no vices, but he is not a wooden puppet. De Forest does not really devote enough attention to him, but what he does give makes the Colonel an admirable, charming, and plausible individual.

As is the case in almost all of De Forest's work, the most poorly portrayed characters in the novel are the lovers, Edgar Bradford and Belle Warden. Generally, De Forest was unable to make his lovers conceptual agents and human beings, I suspect, because he desired a wide audience and tried to provide a love interest which would appeal to it. Thus, his lovers typically conform to the conventions of popular literature rather than his observations of actual society. Although he often avoided the rhetorical excesses of hacks in describing these lovers, he did not often succeed in making them seem like anything more than transparent idealizations whose passions have nothing to do with the blood supposedly flowing in their veins.

De Forest did try to make Bradford something other than a "monster of virtue." He presents him as a man who is "especially proud of his character for honor, and very touchy to any imputation upon it" (123). He tries to give him complexity by suggesting that this respect for honour is an intellectual quality often in conflict with an emotional and passionate nature: "he had rarely shown himself admirable in his treatment of women; his honor had mainly been for men and manly affairs" (250). One sign of this is given by the momentary attraction he feels for Josie, but for the most part he is sketched in a dull and cursory way. Neither his conceit nor his passion are well exhibited by means of anything approaching a full portrait of his manners.

Even more anemic and disappointing, however, is Belle Warden. She is generally cold and sternly patrician and De Forest suggests that her somewhat masculine character needs the sweetening he claims she will give to Bradford's spirit. She is still not very interesting, however, because her individuality is completely subordinated to her status as a conceptual agent. She simply possesses no personality and no life. She is just an object of commentary, but she needed to be presented at length in one or two memorable scenes.

While most of the virtuous characters are disappointing to some extent, the corrupt characters are vital creations. Not only are they generally more interesting, but they are also more extensively portrayed.

James Light says that "The comic masterpiece of De Forest's novels may well be Congressman G. W. Hollowbread."[52] This is, I think, an accurate evaluation because De Forest manages to make Hollowbread absurd as an eccentric, yet he never destroys his humanity. Hollowbread is characterized by his "ruling passion" (361), his desire for flirtations. He is a man of some ability, although he is lazy, and a man with a conscience, "and rather a tender one, too, as men inside of politics then averaged" (63). He is, however, absurdly committed to appearing young so that he can satisfy his passion for women. De Forest is somewhat extreme when he implies that Hollowbread's clothing, which is "furnished with pads, straps, and springs" (183), could almost walk of its own accord. On other occasions, however, he presents a truly comic portrait of a man who knows he is a fool but cannot check himself. Hollowbread comes alive in several scenes which are masterpieces. One such is the scene which occurs after Hollowbread's affections are "embezzled" (44) by Josie and he takes her home in a cab in the pouring rain. The drenched Hollowbread loses all his dignity as he searches for her house in the dark. He is shown to be annoyed by Josie and to recognize the spectacle he has made of himself. Nevertheless, on later occasions, he cannot resist her charm. In another of De Forest's vivid scenes, the Presidential reception, he is shown moving through the crowd after Josie, "like a porpoise among surges" (111). At the end of the reception, Josie coaxes him to catch her when she makes her exit by jumping from a window. Foolishly trying to act the part of a gallant young man, he refuses the assistance of a policeman and is knocked "flat as a flounder" (143). He is forced to make his cold way home afterwards, alone, and in a coat which is many sizes too small for his bulk.

The portrait is a study in disintegration because Hollowbread loses his sense of propriety. Unable to resist Josie's calculated charms, Hollowbread becomes absurd when he expresses adolescent delight in a slipper Josie gives him to carry next to his heart. The once-proud Congressman is then reduced to a puppet dancing as Josie pulls the strings, for even against his best judgment he performs her will. The portrait has a certain amount of pathos, too, for after Josie gains her appropriation she cancels their engagement and drives him insane with grief. This portrait thus stands out as a convincing comic study of a man of intelligence defeated by his own lack of control over his passions.

Sykes Drummond, Hollowbread's rival for Josie's hand, is another impressive creation. He is, in one sense, a type of the Jacksonian demagogue. De Forest says he is "such an undisguised, blatant, bragging scoundrel" that "It must certainly have been a wicked district, or else a district inhabited mainly by idiots, which elected this diabolic youngster" (194). Although far more intelligent than John Vane, he is likewise of "low genus" for De Forest insists that Drummond, "no matter how he might strive to polish his manners, would always be, in emergencies, and in forgetful moments, coarse, insolent, and masterful" (386). Drummond is not simply a type, however, for there is a power, corresponding to his own raw, animal power, in De Forest's portrayal which vividly individualizes him. At all times, he seems "the iron hand without any glove at all" (128). He has an idiosyncratic and boorish laugh, something like a donkey's bray, and insolently gloats over the defeat of his rivals. He is, in fact, insolent and coarse in all his dealings. Because he has no sensitivity, he has the bad taste to tell Josie that she has killed Mrs. Murray by pressing her claim. He displays another of his "characteristic turns of coarseness" (439) by teasing Josie about jilting Hollowbread. Nevertheless, Josie, who prefers gentlemen and knows that Drummond is not one, also finds something impressive in him. This is his overt sexual appeal which he uses to attract and toy with Nancy Appleyard. He has such animal force that he almost bullies Josie into accepting his marriage proposal.

The most impressive and masterful portrait in the novel, however, is that of Josie Murray. She is a woman of amazing contradictions which are suggested by De Forest's initial descriptions of her. De Forest says that "her manners, while proper and lady-like, were facile, gracious, and winning, if one might not even say alluring, . . ." that she is bright and entertaining, and that "she was gifted with a coquettishness which gave her a prompt hold upon the attention of gentlemen" (43). She thus appears simultaneously to possess a lady's sense of decorum and the ability to conduct a railway flirtation. This, however, is merely the surface of her contradictory character. Josie is a class-conscious woman who understands and appreciates patrician social manners, but she is devoid of the moral understanding which is an essential trait of the true lady. She has as De Forest says, "a sensibility which was not so much moral as artistic" (191) and this allows her to appreciate good people and find the evil "'horrid'" (192). She admires Bradford for his scruples, for instance, and finds Drummond somewhat distasteful because he is not a gentleman, and the lobbyist, Jacob Pike, revolting because he is even more common and vulgar. Although she can do nice things instinctively, her major concern is her selfish desire to be a rich socialite. To this end she uses her winning manners to try to embezzle services from all who are attracted to her. During all this her only compunction is her fear that what she is doing may seem to be "low" in a social, not moral sense (123).

Josie is amazingly wily and De Forest presents her manipulations in a series of brilliant set pieces. There is the initial flirtation on the railway car and in the cab with Hollowbread where Josie attracts the Congressman and, at the same time, intelligently begins her education in the ways of Washington. There is the description of her meeting with three Congressmen in one afternoon, each of whom she teases with her coquetry and promises to allow to work for her. There is her interview with General Bangs whom she perceptively realizes wants to be bowed to rather than flirted with. There are the scenes with Hollowbread, first when she agrees to a secret engagement and then when she breaks the now-public engagement, and that with Drummond when she accepts him although already engaged to Hollowbread. There are the scenes with Pike in which she haggles with him and then refuses to pay for his services because she is a lady. In these scenes and more, Josie uses her charm to cajole people into performing deeds she will never thank them for.

Faced with her heartless immorality, one reviewer (possibly Henry James)[53] recoiled in horror and said that he did not feel the "slightest interest" in Josie "for the simple reason that she is a lying, thievish, and totally heartless little jade, without the faintest vestige of a moral nature."[54] This is a sound moral judgment because Josie is everything the reviewer says she is. It is less accurate as an aesthetic judgment for it does no justice to the force of Josie's personality. De Forest is more accurate when he says that "It was impossible to despise her, except from a delicately fastidious point of view . . ." (236). De Forest paints her manners with such skill, indicates her *joie de vivre* so powerfully, as in the presidential reception episode, that it is impossible not to be as nearly bewitched by her as are the unscrupulous Congressmen she employs. Josie Murray is not only De

Forest's best character creation, but one of the most memorable characters in nineteenth-century American literature.

Much of De Forest's achievement in Playing the Mischief is due to his dramatic presentation of Josie as a woman of fine manners and negligible morals, but the novel has other virtues which make it successful as a comedy of manners. There are the characters who fill in the social background, many of whom are vivid and unforgettable although they play minor roles. Squire Nancy Appleyard, the Bloomer, for instance, is an example of a comic eccentric. De Forest scathingly satirizes her as a "caricature of her sex" (127) because her masculine costume violates his conservative sense of propriety and decorum:

> It was impossible not to note, with a sort of discontented surprise, the slope of the shoulders, the hollowness of the back, the breadth of the hips, the fullness of the haunches, and the pulpy plumpness of the thighs. To an eye unaccustomed to plain exhibition of such phenomena the effect was grotesque, a little indecorous, and very nearly revolting. It was a coarse and unpleasing removal of the mysteries with which our race has loved to drape the forms of womanhood (127).

While it is now difficult to sympathize with such an attitude, much of the comedy involving Squire Nancy still works. The scene in which she tries to whip and then to shoot Drummond and the scene in which she ludicrously offers Josie a pellet of poisoned bread are both effective in showing that her eccentric manners are superficial and that she is beneath her masculine suit a silly and sentimental woman.

De Forest's background characters represent every region and help provide his novel with the national breadth he called for in "The Great American Novel."[55] Four of these, Jacob Pike, General Bangs, Pickens Rigdon, and Jeremiah Drinkwater, are outstanding enough to warrant some comment.

Because his voice is "marked by some broad provincialism as vague as the illimitable West" (372), Jacob Pike, the lobbyist and former Kansas Congressman, can be seen as a type of the uncouth Westerner. He is vividly and comically alive and his two interviews with Josie are remarkable set pieces which contrast two different kinds of unscrupulous people. On the one hand, there is Josie who maintains her lady-like pose and swindles the professional briber by refusing to pay him. On the other hand, there is Pike who is coarsely and obviously corrupt but does not have the intelligence to cope with Josie. These scenes humorously demonstrate Josie's vulgarity because they reveal that she differs most significantly from Pike in her manners, not her morals.

The former Union General, Bangs, stands apart from most men because of his habitual lying: "All his life he had lied; even in the army, that school of honor for most men, he had lied" (226). Bangs has built his political career on fictitious Civil War victories. Through his portrait of this hypocrite, De Forest shows that politics, and the facade of patriotism which goes with it, is indeed the most successful refuge for an outright scoundrel.

Rigdon and Drinkwater do not appear much in the novel, but both do participate in notable scenes. Senator Rigdon, the heavy-drinking Southern mountaineer with the "high-toned" air, comes comically alive in a scene at an inn during which he, in a drunken stupor, frightens the tremulous Hollowbread. He thus exemplifies the traits De Forest assigned to the type in Kate Beaumont. Jeremiah Drinkwater, an energetic ninety-year old, is De Forest's vivid presentation of the conventionally shrewd Yankee. He is willing to sign any document, but first he bargains for an appropriate price. His lack of principles reflects the moral void of the period and De Forest adds a finishing touch to his criticism by having Josie declare to Drinkwater, "'You are fit to go to Congress'" (301).

De Forest's dramatic presentation of characters, both major and minor, reinforces the social fable by making palpable the vulgarity and materialism it criticizes. The social fable and the novel of manners here blend and blend well. The concepts are fused to the personalities of the characters who embody them and the didactic content is inseparable from the social drama which illustrates it. Such unity, coherence, and force make Playing the Mischief a masterful portrait and analysis of an era. Playing the Mischief is not, then, just a good political novel. It is an achievement of major proportions, a social novel worthy of comparison with the best work of Howells.

IV

It is in Playing the Mischief that De Forest reached the peak of his achievement. Although it was his best-selling book, with a sale of over six thousand copies,[56] De Forest may have been discouraged for he did not again attempt anything nearly as ambitious. If he had done so, he might have achieved indisputable greatness.

De Forest did not achieve this greatness. I, too, feel with Howells that "I cannot read many pages of his without wishing he had done this or that differently."[57] Nevertheless, when I read them I find in them signs of what made Howells call De Forest "one of the masters of American fiction."[58] In his best work, Miss Ravenel's Conversion, Honest John Vane, Playing the Mischief, and the more seriously flawed Kate Beaumont, De Forest tried to teach and to entertain. By means of the procedures of the novelist of manners he gave life to the ideas he wished to convey, and by means of the social fable he gave satisfying form to his portraits of American society. If he failed, ultimately, to prove himself a complete master of fiction, he did, at least, produce four works which merit inclusion in the canon of nineteenth-century American literature. But this merit has gone largely unrecognized and De Forest is relatively unknown. It is a sad thought that, thirty-five years ago, Edward Wagenknecht made an observation which still remains true of De Forest: "His work might well be tagged Exhibit A in the museum of American literature to refute the comfortable claim that all good books somehow find the readers they deserve automatically."[59]

Notes

[1] "The Moral of the Crédit Mobilier Scandal," The Nation, 16 (30 Jan. 1873), 68.

[2] The Galaxy, 13 (March 1872), 293-302.

[3] Ibid., 298.

[4] Ibid., 297.

[5] Atlantic Monthly, 30 (Dec. 1872), 676-84.

[6] See Acts, v. 1 ff.

[7] "An Inspired Lobbyist," 676.

[8] Atlantic Monthly, 42 (Dec. 1872), 669-82.

[9] Ibid., 687.

[10] Honest John Vane, ed. Joseph Jay Rubin, Monument Edition, 1 (State College, Pennyslvania: Bald Eagle Press, 1960), p. 133. Page numbers for subsequent quotations from this edition will be cited in parentheses.

[11] Playing the Mischief, ed. Joseph Jay Rubin, Monument Edition, 2 (State College, Pennsylvania: Bald Eagle Press, 1961), p. 370. Page numbers for subsequent quotations from this edition will be cited in parentheses.

[12] The Nation, 6 (12 March 1868), 208. Frank Bergmann, The Worthy Gentleman of Democracy (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitatsverlag, 1971), p. 80, also makes this point.

[13] James F. Light, John William De Forest, Twayne's United States Authors Series, 82 (New York: Twayne, 1965), p. 144, mentions Nast as a possible source of inspiration. Rubin, Introduction to De Forest's Honest John Vane, p. 47, compares De Forest with several cartoonists, including Nast.

[14] Light, p. 141.

[15] Light, pp. 139-41, discusses the Crédit Mobilier scandal and lists possible sources of the characters in Honest John Vane.

[16] "Honest John Vane," rev., The Nation, 19 (31 Dec. 1874), 441.

[17] Ibid., 442.

[18] The American Political Novel (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1966), p. 50.

[19] James, 441-42.

[20] Milne, p. 49.

[21] Ibid.

[22] "Recent Literature," rev. of Honest John Vane, Atlantic Monthly, 35 (Feb. 1875), 238.

[23] Introduction to Honest John Vane, p. 46.

[24] Bergmann, pp. 79-80, reads the novel as a "reversed and bedevilled" history of "the true Christian gentleman," Honest John Bunyan.

[25] Introduction to Honest John Vane, p. 46.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., p. 55.

[28] Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, The Gilded Age, The Writings of Mark Twain, Definitive Edition (New York: Gabriel Wells, 1922), VI, 119-20.

[29] Light, p. 143.

[30] Bergmann, p. 78.

[31] Harvests of Change (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 35.

[32] Rubin, Introduction to Honest John Vane, p. 46.

[33] Howells, 238.

[34] "Two Girls," The Nation, 6 (6 Feb. 1868), 108.

[35] Bergmann, p. 78.

[36] Howells, 238.

[37] Light, p. 143.

[38] "John W. De Forest: A Critical Study of His Novels," Diss. Cornell 1955, p. 247.

[39] American Fiction (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1936), p. 170.

[40] "Literary," rev. of Playing the Mischief, Appleton's, 14 (14 Aug. 1875), 215.

[41] Light, p. 152.

[42] Gargano, p. 272, notes that the characters form two separate groups, but his discussion differs considerably from mine.

[43] "John William De Forest's 'Great American Novel,'" in Minor American Novelists, ed. Charles Alva Hoyt (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1970), p. 26.

[44] Honest John Vane, p. 191.

[45] Ibid., p. 179.

[46] Gargano, p. 271, makes this point.

[47] See, however, Rev. Murray's comment about the claim: "'You may depend that the devil is somewhere at the bottom of it'" (168).

[48] Light, pp. 152-53.

[49] Ibid., p. 153.

[50] Ibid., p. 152.

[51] Rubin, Introduction to Playing the Mischief, p. 31.

[52] Light, p. 150.

[53] Light, p. 151, and Rubin, Introduction to Playing the Mischief, p. 29, attribute this review to Henry James.

[54] "New Novels," rev. of Playing the Mischief, by De Forest, The Nation, 21 (12 Aug. 1875), 106.

[55] Light, p. 147, makes this point.

[56] Ibid., p. 152.

[57] "The Heroine of 'Kate Beaumont,'" in Heroines of Fiction (New York and London: Harper's, 1901), II, 162.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Cavalcade of the American Novel (New York: Holt, 1952), p. 108.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. WORKS BY JOHN WILLIAM DE FOREST

The Bloody Chasm. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1882.

"Charleston Under Arms." *Atlantic Monthly*, 7 (April, 1861), 488-505.

"The Colored Member." *The Galaxy*, 13 (March 1872), 293-302.

The Downing Legends: Stories in Rhyme. New Haven, Conn.: The Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor Company, 1901.

European Acquaintance; Being Sketches of People in Europe. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1858.

"The Great American Novel." *The Nation*, 6 (9 Jan. 1868), 27-29.

"The 'High-Toned Gentleman.'" *The Nation*, 6 (12 March 1868), 206-8.

History of the Indians of Connecticut from the Earliest Known Period to 1850. Introd. Wilcomb E. Washburn. 1851; facsimile rpt. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1964.

Honest John Vane. Ed. and introd. Joseph Jay Rubin. Monument Edition, 1. State College, Pennsylvania: Bald Eagle Press, 1960.

"An Independent's Glance at the South." *The Nation*, 23 (28 Sept. 1876), 196-97.

"An Inspired Lobbyist." *Atlantic Monthly*, 30 (Dec. 1872), 676-84.

Irene the Missionary. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1878.

Justine's Lovers. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1878.

Kate Beaumont. Ed. and introd. Joseph Jay Rubin. Monument Edition, 3. State College, Pennsylvania: Bald Eagle Press, 1963.

A Lover's Revolt. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1898.

Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty. Ed. and introd. Gordon S. Haight. New York: Rinehart, 1955.

Oriental Acquaintance; Or, Letters from Syria. New York: Dix, Edwards and Company, 1856.

"The Other Fellow." *Atlantic Monthly*, 42 (Dec. 1878), 669-82.

Overland. New York: Sheldon and Company, 1871.

Playing the Mischief. Ed. and introd. Joseph Jay Rubin. Monument Edition, 2. State College, Pennsylvania: Bald Eagle Press, 1961.

Poems: Medley and Palestina. New Haven, Conn.: The Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor Company, 1902.

Seacliff; Or, The Mystery of the Westervelts. Boston: Phillips, Samson and Company, 1859.

"Two Girls." *The Nation*, 6 (6 Feb. 1868), 107-9.

A Union Officer in the Reconstruction. Ed. James H. Croushore and David M. Potter. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1948.

A Volunteer's Adventures: A Union Captain's Record of the Civil War. Ed. James H. Croushore, introd. Stanley T. Williams. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1946.

The Wetherel Affair. New York: Sheldon and Company, 1873.

Witching Times. Ed. and introd. Alfred Appel, Jr. Masterworks of Literature Series. New Haven, Conn.: College and Univ. Press, 1967.

B. OTHER SOURCES

Aaron, Daniel. *The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973.

Anon. "Editor's Literary Record." Review of *Playing the Mischief*, by John William De Forest. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 51 (Sept. 1875), 602.

Anon. "*Kate Beaumont*. By J. W. De Forest." Review. *The Nation*, 14 (21 March 1872), 189-90.

Anon. "Literary." Review of *Playing the Mischief*, by John William De Forest. Appleton's, 14 (14 Aug. 1875), 215.

Anon. "*Miss Ravenel's Conversion*." Review. *The Nation*, 4 (20 June 1867), 491-92.

Anon. "New Books." Review of *Seacliff; Or, The Mystery of the Westervelts*, by John William De Forest. *New York Times*, 25 June 1859, p. 2.

Anon. "New Novels." Review of *Playing the Mischief*, by John William De Forest. *The Nation*, 21 (12 Aug. 1875), 106.

Bergmann, Frank. "Mark Twain and the Literary Misfortunes of John William De Forest." *Jahrbuch fur Amerikastudien*, 13 (1968), 249-52.

________. *The Worthy Gentleman of Democracy: John William De Forest and the American Dream*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitatsverlag, 1971.

Blair, Walter. *Mark Twain and Huck Finn*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1960.

Blotner, Joseph. *The Political Novel*. New York: Doubleday, 1955.

Brooks, Van Wyck. *New England: Indian Summer, 1865-1915*. In *Literature in New England*. New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1944.

Cady, Edwin Harrison. *The Gentleman in America: A Literary Study in American Culture*. Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1949.

Cecil, L. Moffitt. "*Miss Ravenel* and *Pilgrim's Progress*." *College English*, 22 (Feb. 1962), 352-57.

Cooper, James Fenimore. *Home As Found: Sequel to Homeward Bound*. *The Complete Works of J. Fenimore Cooper*, Leather-Stocking Edition. Vol. 14. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, n.d.

________. *Homeward Bound; Or, The Chase*. *The Complete Works of J. Fenimore Cooper*, Leather-Stocking Edition. Vol. 13. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, n.d.

Cowie, Alexander. *The Rise of the American Novel*. New York: The American Book Co., 1948.

Davidson, James. "The Post-Bellum Poor-White as Seen by De Forest." *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, 24 (June 1960), 101-8.

Eichelberger, Clayton L., et al., comp. "John William De Forest (1826-1906): A Critical Bibliography of Secondary Comment." *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910*, No. 4 (Fall 1968), pp. 1-56.

Falk, Robert. *The Victorian Mode in American Fiction, 1865-1885*. [East Lansing:] Michigan State Univ. Press, 1965.

Ford, Philip Hastings. "The Techniques of John William De Forest, Transitional Novelist." Diss. Ohio State 1953.

Franklin, John Hope. "The Militant South." *The South: A Central Theme?* Ed. Monroe L. Billington. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969. Pp. 62-68.

[Gardiner, William Howard.] "Review of *The Spy*." Rev. of *The Spy*, by James Fenimore Cooper. *North American Review*, 15 (July 1822), 250-82.

Gargano, James W. "A De Forest Interview." *American Literature*, 29 (Nov. 1957), 320-22.

________. "John W. De Forest: A Critical Study of His Novels." Diss. Cornell 1955.

________. "John William De Forest and the Critics." *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910*, No. 4 (Fall 1968), pp. 57-64.

________. "A Thematic Analysis of *Miss Ravenel*." *Topic*, 1 (Fall 1961), 40-47.

[Godkin, E. L.] "The Moral of the Crédit Mobilier Scandal." *The Nation*, 16 (30 Jan. 1873), 68.

Gordon, Clarence. "Mr. De Forest's Novels." *Atlantic Monthly*, 32 (Nov. 1873), 611-21.

Grant, Damian. *Realism*. The Critical Idiom, 9. London: Methuen, 1970.

Hagemann, E. R. "A Checklist of the Writings of John William De Forest (1826-1906)." *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia*, 8 (1956), 185-94.

_________. "De Forest and *The Galaxy*: Some Letters, 1867-1872." *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 59 (April 1955), 175-94.

_________. "John W. De Forest's 'Great American Novel.'" *Minor American Novelists*. Ed. Charles Alva Hoyt. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1970. Pp. 10-27.

_________. "John William De Forest Faces the Nation." *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910*, No. 4 (Fall 1968), pp. 65-75.

_________. "A John William De Forest Supplement, 1970." *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910*, 3 (Spring 1970), 148-52.

Haight, Gordon S. "Realism Defined: William Dean Howells." *Literary History of the United States: History*. Ed. Robert E. Spiller, Willard Thorp, Thomas H. Johnson, Henry Seidel Canby, Richard M. Ludwig. 3rd ed., rev. New York: Macmillan, 1963. Pp. 878-98.

Hansen, Chadwick. "Salem Witchcraft and De Forest's *Witching Times*." *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 104 (Spring 1968), 89-108.

Howe, Irving. *Politics and the Novel*. New York: Horizon Press, 1957.

[Howells, William Dean.] "Editor's Study." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 74 (Feb. 1887), 484-85.

_________. "Editor's Study." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 74 (April 1887), 824-29.

_________. "The Heroine of 'Kate Beaumont.'" *Heroines of Fiction*. New York and London: Harper's, 1901. II, 152-83.

_________. "Recent Literature." Rev. of *Kate Beaumont*, by De Forest. *Atlantic Monthly*, 29 (March 1872), 364-65.

_________. "Recent Literature." Rev. of *The Wetherel Affair*, by De Forest. *Atlantic Monthly*, 34 (Aug. 1874), 229-30.

________. "Recent Literature." Rev. of Honest John Vane, by De Forest. Atlantic Monthly, 35 (Feb. 1875), 238.

________. "Reviews and Literary Notices." Rev. of Miss Ravenel's Conversion, by De Forest. Atlantic Monthly, 20 (July 1867), 120-22.

Hubbell, Jay B. The South in American Literature, 1607-1900. [Durham, North Carolina:] Duke Univ. Press, 1954.

[James, Henry.] "Honest John Vane." Review. The Nation, 19 (31 Dec. 1874), 441-42.

Kettle, Arnold. An Introduction to the English Novel. Vol. I: To George Eliot. London: Hutchinson Univ. Library, 1951.

Kolb, Harold H., Jr. The Illusion of Life: American Realism as a Literary Form. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1969.

Leisy, Ernest E. The American Historical Novel. Norman: Oklahoma Univ. Press, 1950.

Levy, Leo B. "Naturalism in the Making: De Forest's Honest John." New England Quarterly, 37 (March 1964), 89-98.

Light, James F. John William De Forest. Twayne's United States Authors Series, 82. New York: Twayne, 1965.

Lively, Robert A. Fiction Fights the Civil War: An Unfinished Chapter in the Literary History of the American People. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1957.

McIlwaine, Shields. The Southern Poor-White from Lubberland to Tobacco Road. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1939.

McIntyre, Clara F. "J. W. De Forest, Pioneer Realist." Univ. of Wyoming Publications, 9 (31 Aug. 1942), 1-13.

Martin, Jay. Harvests of Change: American Literature, 1865-1914. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967.

Miller, Wayne Charles. An Armed America: Its Face in Fiction. New York: New York Univ. Press, 1970.

Milne, Gordon. *The American Political Novel*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1966.

O'Donnell, Thomas F. "De Forest, Van Petten, and Stephen Crane." *American Literature*, 27 (Jan. 1956), 578-80.

Orians, G. Harrison. "New England Witchcraft in Fiction." *American Literature*, 2 (1930), 54-71.

Osterweis, Rollin G. "The Cult of Chivalry." *The South: A Central Theme?* Ed. Monroe L. Billington. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969. Pp. 51-55.

Oviatt, Edwin. "John De Forest in New Haven." *New York Times*, Saturday Supplement, 17 Dec. 1898, p. 856.

Persons, Stow. *American Minds: A History of Ideas*. New York: Henry Holt, 1958.

Potter, David M. "De Forest." *Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society*, 10 (1951), 188-203.

Quinn, Arthur Hobson. *American Fiction*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1936.

Ross, Morton L. "Cooper's *The Pioneers* and the Ethnographic Impulse." *American Studies*, 16 (Fall 1975), 29-39.

________. "'Manners': An Addition to a Vocabulary for American Studies." *Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association*, 22 (March 1968), 15-28.

S. [Edward Spencer?] "Kate Beaumont. By J. W. De Forrest [sic]." Review. *Southern Magazine* (Baltimore), 11 (July 1872), 118-21.

Sessler, Harvey M. "A Test for Realism in De Forest's *Kate Beaumont*." *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910*, 2 (Fall 1969), 274-76.

Simms, William Gilmore. *Views and Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction: First Series*. Ed. C. Hugh Holman. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1962.

Simpson, Claude M., Jr. "De Forest: *Miss Ravenel*." *The American Novel*. Ed. Wallace Stegner. New York: Basic Books, 1965. Pp. 34-46.

Spencer, Benjamin T. *The Quest for Nationality*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1957.

Stone, Albert E., Jr. "Reading, Writing, and History: Best Novel of the Civil War." *American Heritage*, 13 (June 1962), 84-88.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. Trans. Henry Reeve. Rev. ed. 2 vols. New York: The Colonial Press, 1899.

Trilling, Lionel. "Manners, Morals, and The Novel." *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society*. 1950; rpt. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953. Pp. 200-15.

Tuttleton, James W. *The Novel of Manners in America*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1972.

Twain, Mark [Samuel Langhorne Clemens] and Charles Dudley Warner. *The Gilded Age: A Tale of To-day*. *The Writings of Mark Twain*, Definitive Edition. Vols. 5-6. New York: Gabriel Wells, 1922.

Twain, Mark [Samuel Langhorne Clemens.] *Life on the Mississippi*. *The Writings of Mark Twain*, Definitive Edition. Vol. 12. New York: Gabriel Wells, 1922.

Tyler, Royall. *The Algerine Captive; Or, The Life and Adventures of Doctor Updike Underhill, Six Years a Prisoner Among the Algerines*. Introd. Jack B. Moore. 2 vols. in 1. 1802; facsimile rpt. Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1967.

Wagenknecht, Edward. *Cavalcade of the American Novel*. New York: Holt, 1952.

Weaver, Richard. *The Southern Tradition at Bay: A History of Postbellum Thought*. Ed. George Core and M. E. Bradford. New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1968.

Wilson, Edmund. *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War*. 1962; rpt. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966.